WINNING WHIST

EMERY BOARDMAN

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

WINNING WHIST

A HARMONIOUS SYSTEM OF

COMBINED LONG-SUIT AND SHORT-SUIT PLAY

OF THE

GAME OF WHIST

BY

EMERY BOARDMAN

Each new step we take in thought reconciles twenty seemingly discordant facts as expressions of one law. . . . By going one step farther back in thought, discordant opinions are reconciled, by being seen to be two extremes of one principle.—EMERSON.

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PREFACE

WHIST, for the majority of players (those who neither live to play Whist nor play Whist to live), must ever be not so much a Greco-Roman struggle of intellects as a pleasant recreation and amusement. The prevailing proneness to treat of the modern game as one for experts necessarily tends to alienate from it those who have neither the time, patience, nor inclination to undertake an exacting course of study in order to become qualified to amuse themselves at cards.

> "Who will believe that man could e'er exist
> Who spent near half an age in studying Whist;
> Grew gray with calculation,—labor hard,—
> As if life's business centred in a card?"

Ars longa, vita brevis. The essentials of the game, constituting "old-fashioned Whist" as generally (but imperfectly) played, are the same as taught by Hoyle, the "father of the game," the originator of the "scientific game" of one hundred and fifty years ago. Tradition, teaching

through successive generations, has popularized the elements of the "scientific game" of our ancestors. What was good Whist then is, in the main, good Whist now; nothing new has been substituted (except in matters of detail), but developments and additions have been made.

That the opening play of a hand should generally be made from five or more trumps or from the longest plain suit held by the first player, and that the original lead by each subsequent player should be subject to the same rule (except in so far as it should be modified by the results of the preceding play), was an established principle in the days of Hoyle. The combined play of partners' hands and the conveying of information to partners by certain fixed methods of play are equally old. So, too, the discard from the short suit when trumps are favorable and from the long when adverse. All of these have been dwelt upon and made more prominent, not invented, by the modern authorities; the extreme development of the modern "signaling game" constituting the greatest modification of the older system.

The "Call for Trumps," the system known as the "American Leads," with the resulting "Eleven Rule," comprise the great innovations since the days of Hoyle, Payne, and Matthews. Yet Deschapelles, whom Clay styled "the finest

Whist-player beyond any comparison the world has ever seen," must have laid the foundation of his reputation without the aid of either; and even to-day persons may play excellent Whist without reference to the modern system; yet the fact remains that they must play a vastly better game than their opponents in order to win from those who avail themselves of that system. Hence, being (as herein presented) simple and easily learned, it is worth learning. No one can be a finished player without such knowledge, while its possession gives to indifferent players a decided advantage over their superiors who ignore it.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

THERE are at least three distinct games of Whist: Long Whist, ten points; Short Whist, five points; and American Whist, seven points. In the two former, honors are counted; in the latter they are not. Whist is also very frequently played for continuous points without reference to games. There are, too, the so-called Duplicate, Progressive, and Drive Whist; the last, it has been claimed, evidently receiving its name from its unfortunate tendency to drive good players crazy. The Germans have a mongrelized game combining the principal features of Whist and Pitch. There is also a game called Scotch Whist, which Cavendish says bears about the same resemblance to Whist that the "Scotch fiddle" does to a violin. Whist, honors not counted, as a game or for continuous points, is the subject of this treatise.

"The object of the game is to make tricks."

Tricks may be taken with the winning cards played of the suit led, or by trumping (ruffing) plain suits. It has been truly stated by one writer (Matthews) that "aces and kings will make tricks, and no skill can make a ten win a knave"; and, with equal truth, by another (Cavendish), that "aces and kings are not the only cards which make tricks; twos and threes may become quite as valuable when the suit is established, i.e., when the higher cards of the suit are exhausted. To obtain for your own small cards a value that does not intrinsically belong to them, and to prevent the adversary from obtaining it for his, is evidently an advantage."

The making of tricks through the instrumentality of "best" cards, or of trumps when void of the suit led, obviously does not require skill of an exalted order. The obtaining for cards not necessarily winners "a value that does not intrinsically belong to them," etc., has exercised the ingenuity of the keenest intellects in Whist-playing circles for more than one hundred and fifty years, "and the end is not yet."

There are, generally speaking, two methods by which tricks may be made by cards to which their intrinsic value might not necessarily entitle them. One is by the establishment of a long suit, the holder being left with the lead after the adverse trumps have been exhausted. In

this case every remaining (long) card of the established suit may take a trick. To effect this purpose the first lead from each hand should generally be trumps (from a suit of five or more), or from its longest plain suit; and, in case of two suits of equal length, from its strongest, that of the two containing superior strength in high cards. This course, as contradistinguished from "playing for the odd trick," was styled by the early writers "playing a great game." All modern systems of leading are based upon the latter. It is essentially an attack, the play of the strong hand.

> "Because the good old rule
> Sufficeth them—the simple plan
> That they should take who have the power,
> And they should keep who can."

The other method comprises the tactics of weakness (concealment, artifice, and deception). Hereunder comes the taking advantage of position, the most common instances of which grow out of holding in one hand the best and third-best cards unplayed of the suit led (the second-best being in another hand), and kindred situations. If this fourchette is held by the last player, it constitutes the combination originally styled tenace. In this case it is evident that, bar trumping, the last player makes two tricks in

the suit; while if obliged to lead therefrom, the second-best guarded being against him, he could make but one. Should the fourchette be held by the third player, he may finesse by putting on third-best, instead of the best, thus occasionally "stealing a trick" when the second-best does not lie to his left.

Another branch of this method consists in deceiving the enemy in the course of the numberless accidents and stratagems of the play, whereof one instance is underplay. This is holding up the best card unplayed in a suit opened by one's left-hand opponent and leading a lower one in the hope that he, as second player, will play low instead of putting on second-best, if in hand, believing the best to be behind him, thus giving the first player's partner an equal chance to win the trick, while the held-up best card still commands the suit. Another stratagem sometimes used, but less often justifiable, is the playing of false cards, i.e., cards played contrary to the established rules, and so indicating a state of affairs which does not exist; which is but little more commendable in Whist than is the like in the ordinary affairs of daily life. The extreme limits within which such play is allowable are these: when the partner is too uninformed to be deceived or too weak to be injured by the deception; when the play cannot deceive him, but may

deceive the adversary; and when the hand is so nearly exhausted that no harm can be done to the partner by deceiving him. Though false cards are not infrequent, it has been alleged that "Americans are peculiarly open to the charge of playing for their own hands alone."

To sum up: "The object of the game is to make tricks." Tricks may be made by the master cards of each suit, by the long cards of established suits, through tenace and finesse, by stratagem, and by ruffing.

CHAPTER II

THE LEADS

In deciding what card to lead from the long suit, regard must be paid not only to the establishment of it, but also to the possibility of making tricks in it early in case it should not be possible ultimately to bring it in. — POLE.

Whist is a language, and every card played an intelligible sentence. — CLAY.

A golden maxim for Whist is that it is of more importance to inform your partner than to deceive your adversary. — IBID.

THE so-called American Leads, in plain suits, are admirably devised for effecting the double purpose of making tricks early and, at the same time, conveying to partner as much information as possible concerning cards in hand. The basis of the system is a suit of four cards, being the shortest long suit that can be held. Its distinctively American features relate rather to the conveying of information than directly to the making of tricks. The following statements and

explanations concerning this system will be much more readily apprehended if the reader will examine them with the cards referred to before him.

Let him, then, if he will, arrange in parallel lines the following:

Hearts: ace, queen, ten, nine;
Diamonds: ace, knave, ten, nine;
Clubs: ace, ten, eight, six.

From each of these three suits the first lead should be the fourth-best card, or lowest. The lead of fourth-best, which must always be the nine or lower, informs partner that it comes from the first player's best suit, and that three better ones of that suit are still in hand. Subtracting the number of pips on the card led (say the six) from eleven, the remainder, five, conveys the valuable information that five better ones of that suit are apportioned to the second, third, and fourth players. A glance at the cards in hand and those played to the first trick will frequently locate them very closely. Suppose the first trick in play and suit taken by partner who leads fourth-best from his own strong suit, the trick being taken by his partner, the first player or eldest hand. The latter now leads again, let us say, from his club suit. The second card led must be the ace. This conveys to his partner

the information, in connection with the first lead, that the first player's best suit was one of four exactly, headed by the ace (not in sequence), and that he still holds of it two cards better than the six; but that neither of them is the king, though the queen or knave, but not both, may be in his hand if not otherwise accounted for. Had the first player held (and the first lead been from) one of the other suits, the information would have been more prompt and definite, for the nine is properly originally led from a long suit only as the fourth-best card of one of the two combinations first above specified. Add to each of the three suits one or more small cards. The suits now comprising more than four, the order of leading is reversed. The first lead should now be the ace, and the second lead the original fourth-best, to which the Eleven Rule still applies as to the original holding. The lead of the ace always indicates a suit of five or more, with the possible exception only of ace, queen, knave (with or without ten), four, or more. The second lead solves the doubt; if it is the queen or ten, it comes from a suit of four cards; otherwise, of five or more. We have now acquired the material for a rule to govern such cases, that rule being as follows:

In all long plain suits headed by the ace, not in sequence, (excepting those containing both

queen and knave,) from a suit of just four, first lead fourth-best and ace second; with more than four in suit, first lead the ace and original fourth-best second.

We will next proceed to establish a rule applying to a much greater number of cases. It will, nevertheless, prove perfectly simple and easy if attacked in the proper spirit.

> "Tender-handed stroke a nettle,
> And it stings you for your pains;
> Grasp it like a man of mettle,
> And it soft as silk remains."

Let the reader arrange, if he pleases, in parallel lines, these cards:

Hearts: ace, king, two small;
Diamonds: ace, king, queen, one small;
Clubs: ace, king, queen, knave.

From ace, king, four in suit, first lead the king and second the ace. Add one or more small. The leads are now reversed; with five or more in suit, first lead the ace and second the king.

From ace, king, queen, four in suit, first lead the king and second the queen. Add one small. With five in suit, first lead the queen and second the ace. Add one or more small. With six or more in suit, first lead the queen and second the king.

From ace, king, queen, knave, four in suit, first lead the king and second the knave. Add one small. With five in suit, first lead the knave and second the ace. Add another small. With six in suit, first lead the knave and second the king. Add one or more small. With seven or more in suit, first lead the knave and second the queen.

Now remove the heart suit and the two remaining aces, with sufficient small ones to leave but four cards in each suit, and add another row of cards containing:

Spades: king, queen, knave, ten.

From king, queen, four in suit, first lead the king and second the queen. Add one or more small. With five or more in suit, first lead the queen and second the king.

From king, queen, knave, four in suit, first lead the king and second the knave. Add one small. With five in suit, first lead the knave and second the king. Add one or more small. With six or more in suit, first lead the knave and second the queen.

From king, queen, knave, ten, four in suit, lead first the king and second the ten. Add one small. With five in suit, lead first the knave and second the king. Add one or more small. With six or more in suit, lead first the knave and second the queen.

We may now generalize. Each one of the above-mentioned suits was headed by a sequence to ace or king; and, in every instance, from the four suit, the king was the first lead, with the lowest unplayed card of the sequence for second. It may be proper to remark here that, from long suits, king is originally led only from a suit of four and no more. With more than four, in suits headed by those sequences, we have seen that the first lead, in every instance, was (with the exception of the king above noted) the lowest honor of the sequence; and the second was its lowest honor that would leave three lower cards of the suit unplayed in hand. In play two exceptions are made, viz., if king (led from king, queen) wins, next lead the original fourth-best; and if queen (led from king, queen) wins, next lead the original fifth-best. Either winning trick would indicate that the ace was probably with partner; and the low-card lead, second, would give him an opportunity to play it to best advantage. Sufficient data have now been secured for the deduction of the second rule, which is as follows:

In all long plain suits headed by a sequence to ace or king, from four, first lead the king and second the lowest unplayed card of the sequence; with more than four, first lead the lowest of the honors in sequence (always excepting the king,

which is originally led only from exactly four), and second its lowest honor that will leave unplayed three lower cards of the suit. But if king (led from king, queen) wins, next lead the original fourth-best; and if queen (led from king, queen) wins, next lead the original fifth-best.

We will now make a new "lay-out," and the last. Please to arrange, as before, the following-named suits:

Hearts: ace, queen, knave, ten;
Diamonds: queen, knave, ten, nine;
Clubs: knave, ten, nine, eight.

From ace, queen, knave, ten, four in suit, first lead the ace and second the ten. Now remove the ten, substituting one small. Here again the first lead should be the ace, but the queen second. Add one or more small. With five or more in suit, the first lead is still the ace, but the second is now the knave.

From queen, knave, ten, nine, four in suit, first lead the queen and second the nine. Remove the nine, substituting one small. Again first lead the queen, but second the knave. Add one or more small. With five or more in suit, first lead the queen and second the ten.

The following leads obtain only in the trump suit; in plain suits, in like cases, the original lead should be the fourth-best. But in trumps,

from knave, ten, nine, eight, four in suit, first lead the knave and second the eight. Remove the eight, substituting one small. Again first lead the knave, but second the ten. Add one or more small. With five or more in suit, first lead the knave and second the nine. These instances constitute the materials from which to construct the third rule, as follows:

In all long plain suits headed by a sequence of three or more, queen up or (in trumps) knave up, and in like suits headed by ace, queen, knave, first lead the highest; second, the original fourth-best if lowest of the sequence and lowest of the suit; otherwise, second, lead the original third- or second-best, as may be necessary in order to retain at least two lower cards of the suit unplayed.

Here it is earnestly recommended that the reader should, with the cards again before him, repeatedly go over the ground covered by the three preceding rules until they are thoroughly memorized and understood. This he can the better afford to do as the four remaining ones will then be found so simple as to explain themselves. All should be memorized; not a difficult undertaking when it is considered that seven short general rules, thoroughly mastered, convey the full knowledge of all the leads, in plain suits or trumps, in long suits or short.

CHAPTER III

THE LEADS (*Concluded*)

RULES

THOUGH involving a trifling repetition, for convenience of reference all the rules for the different leads are here grouped in their regular order.

1. In all long plain suits headed by the ace, not in sequence, (excepting those containing both queen and knave,) from a suit of just four, first lead fourth-best and ace second; with more than four in suit, first lead the ace and original fourth-best second.

2. In all like suits headed by a sequence to ace or king, from four, first lead the king and second the lowest unplayed card of the sequence; with more than four, first lead the lowest of the honors in sequence (always excepting the king, which is originally led only from exactly four), and second its lowest honor that will leave un-

played three lower cards of the suit. But if king (led from king, queen) wins, next lead the original fourth-best; and if queen (led from king, queen) wins, next lead the original fifth-best.

3. In all like suits headed by a sequence of three or more, queen up or (in trumps) knave up, and in like suits headed by ace, queen, and knave, first lead the highest; second, the original fourth-best if lowest of the sequence and lowest of the suit; otherwise, second, lead the original third- or second-best, as may be necessary in order to retain at least two lower cards of the suit unplayed.

4. In all like suits headed by king, knave, ten, lead the ten; should it win, next lead the original fourth-best; should the ace, but not queen, fall to the first trick, lead the king second; should the queen fall to the first trick, with four in suit originally, second lead the king; with more, the knave.

5. From all other like suits lead fourth-best.

6. With less than seven trumps (unless with at least three honors, Cavendish excepts king, queen, ten), lead fourth-best. In other cases, lead as in plain suits.

7. From a three-card suit with but a single honor, if higher than the knave, lead the lowest; if headed by the knave, the highest; in trumps, the ace. If partner has indicated that the suit

to be led from is his best, lead the highest in all cases. With any combination of high cards from which a high-card lead should be made in long suits, lead as from suits of four. From two-card suits lead the higher.

INFERENCES

From the application of the preceding rules to the long plain suits, inferences may be drawn as follows:

Ace is led only from a suit of five or more, or from ace, queen, knave, four, or more;

King is led only from a suit of four;

Queen is led only from a suit of five or more, or from queen, knave, ten, four, or more;

Knave is led only from a suit of five or more, or, in trumps, from knave, ten, nine, four, or more;

Ten is led only from king, knave, ten, four, or more;

Nine is led only as fourth-best, and must come from a suit of ace, queen, ten, nine, or ace, knave, ten, nine.

Whenever any one of the six highest cards is evidently irregularly led, it should come from the head of a short suit.

SUGGESTIONS

Having mastered the leads, it has become manifest that they are, as a fixed system, devised for the benefit of the partner of the player making them rather than, directly, of the player himself. Hence, when playing with a partner who understands them, or against opponents who do not, it will be well to adhere to the system; but far otherwise when you cannot thereby give information to your partner, but must inform your adversaries. In such cases it will be found advisable to mix the leads up a little. Any card of a sequence is as good as another for the taking of a trick; and one lower or higher than fourth-best is frequently quite as available for the establishment of a suit. It is much worse than useless to proclaim the contents of your hand in a language intelligible to your opponents, but not to your partner.

CHAPTER IV

THE PLAY

The play 's the thing.
SHAKESPEARE.

THE deal and the lead are the original opposing elements in the game of Whist. Here is the starting-point of analysis, the foundation of the philosophy and strategy of the game. The dealer has the advantage, being the only player who is from the first absolutely sure of holding a trump or having the last play upon a trick. The consideration of the principal advantages and probabilities resulting from the deal is reserved for another chapter. A few suggestions relating to the conventional system of play should be made here.

As before stated, the object of the leads is to win tricks and incidentally convey information to partner, and the play should be intelligently adapted to the twofold purpose. One should

never play at random, but always in furtherance of some plan or system. The ends most frequently subserved by well-directed leads are as follows:

To draw the adverse trumps;

To establish a long plain suit for self or partner;

To enable partner to make a small trump;

To force a trump from the adverse strong trump hand;

To answer a signal;

To take tricks with the long cards of an established suit after the adverse trumps are out;

To give partner a chance to finesse; and, akin to this,

To lead up to a weak suit in the hand of the fourth player; or,

To lead through a strong suit in the hand of the second player;

To give the lead to partner;

To give the lead to an adversary, that he may be obliged to lead up to self or partner;

To force a discard.

Every lead should be made in order to effect some one of the above purposes, or some other formulated with equal clearness in the mind of the player. The foundation of the modern conventional system of leads and play is the design of establishing a long plain suit, bringing it into

play after the adverse trumps have been exhausted, and the prevention of success in similar tactics of the enemy. It is with reference to these points that the following suggestions concerning the play of the several hands are made.

FIRST HAND

With five or more trumps, generally lead them; otherwise, usually lead from a plain suit. Cavendish says, "From a well-protected hand containing four trumps, two being honors, a trump may be led originally." There is also good authority for an original trump lead from four when such is the only long suit in hand. When not sufficiently strong in trumps to lead them, a plain suit must be chosen. Pole and Payne say that the opening lead should be made from the longest suit; Cavendish, Clay, and Hoyle say the strongest. Length being generally considered the principal element of strength (as it is in trumps, or plain suits combined with preponderating strength in trumps), there is practically but little in controversy between those authorities. As between a suit of but four very low cards and another of three very high ones, Cavendish expresses a preference for an original lead from the short suit; but he does not clearly indicate at just what point of difference the

short-suit lead should, in his opinion, be adopted. Some of the American writers have proposed to draw the line at a suit of four only, headed by a card lower than the nine. The point in question may well prove more prolific in debate than in practical results.

With five or more, lead from the long suit, and generally with four. Strength in two suits being substantially equal, if one (but not the other) is headed by ace, queen, or ace, knave, or king, knave, it would generally be better to lead from that other. If your best suit has been previously opened by your right-hand opponent, usually open your second-best suit. Payne likewise says, "Be very cautious how you change suits, and let no artifice of the adversary induce you to it." When leading trumps from five or more, it is generally best to continue until one of your opponents renounces.

In returning partner's suit, lead the best unplayed card if you hold it, or second-best from second- and third-best; otherwise, if you originally held three, return the higher remaining; and if you originally held four or more, the lowest. Adopt the same rule in leading what you know to be your partner's strong suit, not before opened. But if your partner originally leads an ace, return him your best card, if an honor, regardless of number. If you have a

good suit of your own, generally better lead from that once before returning your partner's, unless you took the first trick with the ace and can return an honor, or took it with an honor and can return the ace. This is subject to the further exception that, if you are stronger in the suit than your partner, you may treat it as your own by retaining the strength in your own hand and returning to him a low card.

Should you win the first trick in your partner's plain suit with the queen or lower, as your own best, it would indicate that the command of the suit might be with the second player; in which case it would generally be better to give your partner the lead in some other suit, that your right-hand opponent may not have the last play in your partner's. If possible, always retain a small card of your partner's long suit with which to give him the lead after trumps are out. When at a loss for something better to do, it is well to lead a suit in which the fourth player is weak or the second player strong.

For the rest, reference may be had to the rules for the leads. But if you have already trumped in without trumping out, from a suit headed by ace, king, invariably lead the ace; your partner might otherwise trump in to establish a cross-ruff.

The following paragraphs, from Matthews, are

introduced in the hope and belief that they will be found useful:

With a strong hand in trumps, particularly if you have a long suit, avoid ruffing and, still more, over-ruffing your right-hand adversary as much as possible. As this is a maxim less understood, less practised, and more indispensably necessary than almost any other, I will endeavor to explain it to beginners as clearly as I am capable: Cards being nearly equal, the point to which all the manœuvres of a good Whist-player tend is to establish a long suit, to preserve the last trump to bring it into play, and to frustrate the same play of his adversaries. With an honor (or even a ten), with three other trumps, by well managing them, you have a right to expect success. In this case, do not over-trump your right-hand adversary early in the hand; but throw away a losing card, by which, there remaining but twelve trumps, your own hand is strengthened, and your partner has the tenace in whatever suit is led; whereas, had you over-ruffed, you would have given up the whole game to secure one trick. But there are reasons for breaking this rule: first, if your left-hand adversary has shown a decided great hand in trumps (in which case make your tricks while you can), or, second, if your partner decidedly means to force you. To understand if this be the case, you are to observe if your partner plays the winning or losing card of the suit you have refused. If the former, it is by no means clear he means to force you, and you play your own game. If the latter, you are to suppose him strong in trumps, and depend on him to protect your long suit. A due reflection on this will convince you of the value of that maxim which enjoins you never to play a strong game with a weak hand, or *vice versa*. A few deviations from this effectually destroy that confidence necessary between

partners, and introduce a confusion and consequences that cannot be too carefully avoided or too strenuously deprecated. . . .

The attentive perusal (in the mode prescribed) of these maxims will, I think, with a little practice, enable a beginner to play with very good cards to considerable advantage. The difficulty of the game does not consist in this; for aces and kings will make tricks, and no skill can make a ten win a knave. But there are hands which frequently occur when skilful players win, where bunglers lose their points; and (unless when the cards run very high) it is on the playing of such success depends, viz., ace or king and three other trumps, a tierce major, with others of a second suit, and a probable trick in a third. The player's plan should be to remain either with the last trump or the last but one with the lead; and to accomplish this last he must not win the second lead with the commanding trump, but reserve it for the third. Nothing, then, but five trumps in one hand can probably prevent his establishing his long suit; for he forces out the best trump, and the thirteenth brings in his suit again, which (without the lead after the third round of trumps) would be impossible.

SECOND HAND

Cavendish says, "You should generally play your lowest card second hand." But, with a sequence of high cards in a short suit, put on the lowest of the sequence if it covers; in a long suit you may adhere to the low-card play, in accordance with the general principle that in short suits, as in hands weak in trumps, you should

play your partner's game; in the long suits, as in the strong hands, your own. But if your sequence does not head your suit, or with a head sequence of three or more, or ace, king, or king, queen, better cover in all cases. When playing from a sequence at either second or third hand, put on the lowest; at fourth hand, if desirous of continuing the suit, you may win with the highest, and return the lowest "to inform your partner," or lead low to underplay your left-hand opponent.

Generally do not cover an honor led with any other honor than the ace or the lowest of a sequence to the ace, the principal exception being the necessary taking of an off chance for the purpose of winning the lead; but if you hold a fourchette on the card led, put on the higher card. If the suit can go round but once, put on the ace if in hand. If you hold the best unplayed card of the suit led, second round, generally put it on. If you desire to win the lead, play for it.

Holding an honor or ten singly guarded, generally play low first round. Your partner has the advantage in position, and it is an even chance he has a better card than the third player; while, if you expose your weakness by putting on an honor, you give your adversaries an opportunity to finesse in subsequent rounds.

In trumps, however, play the singly guarded king; so, too, in plain suits, on the nine led, or on the eight when your low card is the nine. Likewise, in plain suits, put your singly guarded queen on the ten, nine, or the eight when your low card is the nine.

With ace, queen, at the head of your suit, generally do not put on the queen first round. With ace, queen, ten, from short suits, put on the ten; from long trump suits, or like plain suits if strong enough in trumps to lead them, put on the ten; otherwise, in plain suits, the queen.

Other finesses are rarely justifiable, as evidenced and illustrated by the following anecdote from Cavendish's "Card-table Talk," concerning James Clay, Esq., M.P., the greatest English Whist-player of his day:

The great authority was looking on at Whist when the second player, whom he favored not, holding ace, king, knave, instead of playing king, as he should have done, finessed the knave.

The queen made third hand; ace and king were afterward trumped.

The player then turned to Clay and asked whether the finesse of the knave was justifiable.

To him the following crushing rejoinder, spoken very deliberately at the wall opposite instead of to the querist:

"At the game of Whist, as played in England [pause], you are not called upon to win a trick [another pause] unless you please."

If a fourth-best card is led, and, by application of the Eleven Rule, you find that you hold all the higher cards not in the hand of the leader, put on the lowest card that will cover. Attention to the Eleven Rule and to the play of the first round will frequently enable you to win the second trick cheaply, still retaining the command of the suit.

When weak in trumps, unless your partner is strong, better not put on the best of an adversary's suit at second hand unless your partner has none of it.

When, at second hand, you hold none of the suit led, with three trumps or less, generally trump in; with four, do not do so unless the card led is a certain winner, in which case you generally should. It is not permissible to refuse to win a trick certainly adverse unless sure to make at least two by so doing; and Hoyle says, "When you are in doubt, win the trick." With six or more trumps, you may generally trump in and trump out; and with five you may do so if you have an established suit; otherwise, generally trump in and lead from your strong suit. Whenever, with four or more trumps, you accept a force without trumping out, generally trump in with the next to the lowest trump. When the latter is subsequently played, partner is informed of your original strength. You may do the like

in trumping in when intending to trump out with a low card.

THIRD HAND

The general rule is for third hand to play his best card, or the lowest of a head sequence, to his partner's low lead; but when not attempting to take the trick (unless calling for trumps, echoing, or unblocking), to play his lowest card.

Holding ace and queen or ace, queen, and knave, to a low lead, first round, king unplayed, put on the queen, or the knave if in hand. If it wins play the ace. No other finesse is conceded in the first round of partner's strong plain suit. In the second round, holding second- and fourth-best unplayed cards and with good grounds for believing that the best is with the left-hand adversary, put on the fourth-best. Unless both first- and third-best are with the last player, the finesse secures one trick; otherwise both are lost in whichever order played. So with best certainly at your left, and third- and fourth-best certainly against you, holding second-best and others, you may finesse fifth-best or pass it if led by your partner, or, of course, sixth-best led by your partner when holding fifth-best yourself. Otherwise do not finesse in partner's strong plain suit unless strong enough

in trumps to lead them. But, having sufficient cause for believing an original lead to come from a short suit, any reasonable finesse may be made. Finesse deeply in suits in which partner is weak, and freely in the adversaries' suits and in return leads of your own if desirable.

Do not put queen on partner's ten, and rarely on his nine; unless covered at second hand play low. Do not cover an honor originally led by your partner except in unblocking; do not trump one unless covered or trumped by second hand. You may block your partner's suit by taking a trick with the last card of it remaining in your hand, in which case it may prove impossible for your partner to regain the lead and continue his suit. Play intended to prevent this result is called unblocking. In unblocking, with ace and one small, cover with ace and return the small one; with king and one small, put king on partner's ace or queen; with ace and queen only, to partner's lead of ten, put on the ace and return the queen; with ace and knave, with or without one small, put ace on the honor led and return the knave. To partner's long-suit high-card lead of anything but king, with four in suit, finish unblocking on the third round. Thus, play third-best on partner's original lead; second-best, second round; best, third round, retaining the lowest until the last. This manner of play

is called the plain-suit echo. With three in suit, in like manner finish unblocking on the second round, playing lowest third. This is sometimes used in trumps or plain suits to indicate three trumps and no more; it is then called a sub-echo, of which there is another form. With ace or king and one small, if sure of being able to give partner the lead in another suit, you need not unblock, neither if yourself and partner are unable to bring in the suit if established, nor sometimes with an unskilled partner. If stronger in the suit led than your partner, you may make it your own by retaining the strength in your own hand; otherwise finish unblocking with your last card of the suit but one, retaining the lowest with which to give the lead to partner after the adverse trumps are out.

When playing from a sequence put on the lowest. Always apply the Eleven Rule and consult your own hand and the play of second hand, in case of fourth-best led, and govern your play accordingly. After taking the first trick of your partner's long suit, on returning it, lead him the best, or second-best from second- and third-best, if in hand; otherwise, the higher of any two or the lowest of any three or more remaining in hand.

When you win the first trick in his long suit with the ace and can return an honor, or win

with an honor and can return the ace, or when your partner originally led the ace and you can return him an honor, you should make the return before opening your own suit unless that is the trump suit. Unless your own plain suit is strong as well as long, you need not hurry about opening it unless the strength in trumps is clearly on your side—perhaps not always even then unless it is superior to your partner's.

Ten tricks have been played and you remain with ace, ten, and one small trump, not the nine, knave turned at your right. Suppose queen led by your partner and covered at second hand (by your right-hand opponent) with king. If you take that trick you probably lose the other two; but by playing small you must win them. Trumps being out, if satisfied by the play that knave and one small remain at your right, the like might be ventured in a plain suit.

FOURTH HAND

Generally win the trick, if possible, as cheaply as you can; but if it is already your partner's, put on your lowest card of the suit; if you have none of it, discard originally the lowest card of your weakest suit (unless it leaves an honor single or is itself a singleton), but if the strength

in trumps is against you discard from your longest. Winning with the highest of a sequence of three or more trumps and afterward playing the lowest indicates that you hold all between. The same might sometimes be done in plain suits.

It sometimes, though rarely, happens that you should take a trick already your partner's. For instance, trumps are out, and he, as second player, has taken a trick in a suit wherein you hold ace and one small only, and which is evidently his only strong suit, and is the only one in which you hold a winning card or one which your partner can win. Here you should put on the ace and return the small one. You thus unblock your partner's suit and risk one trick on the chance, almost the only chance, of winning more. In general, take liberties with your partner's tricks or suit with caution, bearing in mind the old saying that it requires a good player to win his partner's trick.

It may sometimes happen, too, that you should refuse to take a trick not your partner's. With but three cards unplayed and trumps out, you hold the ace, knave, and one small of a suit from which your left-hand opponent leads the king, from king, queen, ten. If you win this trick, you evidently lose the other two. If you put on the small one instead, it is equally evident that

you must win the other two. So, too, in the trump suit.

In all the vicissitudes of play and of life, these two maxims will be found worth observing: "First be sure you are right, then go ahead." "When you are in doubt, win the trick." They comprise the essence of the lives of two men—Crockett, who sacrificed his life in the struggle for Texan independence, and Hoyle, the "father of the game."

CHAPTER V

THE PLAY (*Continued*)

TRUMPS

CAVENDISH says, "It cannot be too strongly impressed that the primary use of strength in trumps is to draw the adversaries' trumps for the bringing in of your own or your partner's long suit."

With five or more trumps, generally lead them originally.

With but four, an honor, and three three-card plain suits, or a well-protected hand in all plain suits, or with an established suit in your own or your partner's hand, you may venture a trump lead.

With three trumps or less, you may lead them if necessary to stop a cross-ruff; Matthews says, "if your adversaries are playing from weak suits."

Your partner having dealt you a strong hand

in all plain suits and but one trump, if that should be a high one, you might be justified in leading it originally, as it is nearly an even chance, under such circumstances, that your partner will hold five or more, and more than three to one that he will hold four or more.

Clay says, "With four trumps, do not trump an uncertain card, i.e., one which your partner may be able to win. With less than four trumps and no honor, trump an uncertain card." Cavendish adds, "A refusal to be thus forced is seldom requisite if you have more than four trumps; with six you are mostly strong enough to trump in and to lead trumps; with five you may do the same if your suit is established; but if not, it is generally best to take the force and to lead your suit."

With ace and three small trumps, it is generally better not to win an adverse trump lead before the third round, unless you have an opportunity by forcing to enable your partner to make his small trumps. So, too, it is generally not advisable to put the thirteenth trump upon an adversary's lead before the third round. It may then prove very difficult for him to bring in his suit. Holding the best trump, and an adversary the only other, better force out the adverse trump by leading your long suit rather than draw it by a trump lead, unless your suit

is established. At the close of the hand, holding only best, fourth-best, and one small (second- and third-best and one small at your right), to your right-hand adversary's high lead put on your small one and win both remaining tricks; otherwise you win but one. This is correct play in plain suits after the trumps are out.

SPECIAL LEADS IN TRUMPS

If there is occasion for leading trumps, when queen, knave, ten, or nine has been turned at your right, and you hold a sequence at the head of a fourchette on the turned card, save with ace, king, or king, queen, lead the highest of the sequence; but holding, for instance, ace, king, knave, over the queen, or king, queen, ten, over the knave, with four, lead the king, and with more, the ace or queen. In either event, if you win the trick, give the lead to partner and await his return of the trump suit in order to finesse the knave or ten. With ace, king, and small ones, like play may be made, holding best over the queen. In like manner, with ace, queen, ten, over the knave, lead the queen; and in similar cases do the like.

With ace, king, and not less than three small, queen turned at the right, ace, king, may be led; but with king, queen at the head of the suit,

knave turned at the right, the king may be led, and, if it wins, be followed by the lowest of the suit in order that partner may play ace and return. With king or queen, ten, and small ones, knave turned at the right, lead a small one on the chance that partner may hold an honor. With king turned at the right, and holding queen, knave, nine, knave may be led, and, on return of the suit, the nine finessed; and so in like cases.

With an honor turned at the left, holding a lower sequence, lead it down from the head. If queen is so turned, holding ace, king, and small, lead a small one on the chance of catching her later. With queen so turned, holding knave and small ones, the knave may be led.

Payne says, "If an honor is turned up by your partner, and you are strong in trumps, lead a small one; but if weak in them, lead the best you have. By this play the weakest hand will support the strongest."

Pole says, "The trump suit is the most important thing in the game of Whist."

THE CALL

Not having the lead, but holding not less strength than five trumps, an honor, or four trumps, two honors, with good cards in your

own or partner's hand, you may signal, or "call," for your partner to lead trumps. This is substantially a command for him to blindly play your game, and should be given only when you are at least reasonably sure of success. But only an original "call," or one made at the first opportunity, has this effect; one made later merely amounts to an expression of the opinion that a trump lead is now advisable. The "call" is made by playing an unnecessarily high card when not attempting to take the trick. If sufficiently high,—for instance, queen to adverse king led,—it might even induce the adversary to lead trumps to protect his suit from being trumped. That it was unnecessarily high is determined by the subsequent fall of the lower card. This signal must be carefully distinguished from unblocking and other irregular plays for special purposes. Clay says, "In asking for a trump, it is rarely safe to give the invitation in your partner's lead with a high card —a knave or a queen. . . . It must also be very carefully observed that this invitation must be given in the first round of a suit." This, of course, is subject to the exception of an attempt to take the trick.

This signal should not be employed without consideration. If partner has a weak hand he may not be able to get the lead. His unavailing

high play for that purpose will still further weaken him. Your signal will have put your adversaries upon the watch to prevent either of you from getting in until after they have spoiled your trump suit either by forcing or by leading through it. It also puts them upon the defensive in keeping guards upon their weak suits, making it more difficult to establish and bring in a long suit against them. Against weak players, however, the "call" and all other signaling will commonly give a decided advantage.

Partner's refusal to trump an uncertain trick to which he renounces, without knowing you to hold the winning card (when he has given no previous indication of weakness in trumps), is in general a call for trumps complete in itself. His refusal, under like circumstances, to trump a trick certainly adverse is even more emphatic.

Knowing the leader to be destitute of trumps, his partner's "call" is a demand that he change the suit led. It might be made when the partner held the command of the other two, or of the only other one remaining in the leader's hand. So, too, a "call" in discarding (trumps being against you, and partner having no trumps or knowing that you hold none) would indicate that you had entire command of the suit in which you "call."

THE ANSWER

You should answer your partner's "call" by leading a trump at the earliest possible opportunity—the ace, if you have it, or second-best from second and third; otherwise the highest of any three or less, or the lowest of any four or more trumps in your hand, unless they include three honors or queen, knave, ten. In either of the two latter cases play, as from the short suits, from the highest down.

THE ECHO

To partner's call for trumps, or, if he by his play indicates the possession of four or more trumps, holding a like number yourself, and being unable to lead them immediately, you should improve the earliest opportunity to make the trump signal (in this case called an "echo"), in order to inform your partner of your strength. If you lead, your play of trumps will show whether it is from a long or short suit. Should your partner get in and lead trumps before you have had an opportunity or occasion to "echo" in a plain suit, you may "echo" in the trump suit when practicable. Your partner may indicate strength in trumps by leading them, by forcing you to trump, or by refusing a force

himself. On being forced, you may "echo" by trumping in with a card higher than you subsequently play. To an adverse trump lead or "call," if yourself strong enough to "call" originally, you may likewise "echo."

THE SUB-ECHO

The "echo" indicating to partner the possession of four or more trumps, the "sub-echo" announces three exactly. It is only employed after partner has led trumps or called for them. If the partner of the player thus announcing strength in trumps has in any way shown that he did not originally hold four or more trumps, he may "echo" as usual; otherwise in the second and third rounds of a plain suit by playing the cards thereof in the following order: penultimate, antepenultimate, and ultimate. When partner does not indicate trump strength, the latter form of the "sub-echo" is used by some players to announce the holding of exactly four trumps, but insufficient strength to either lead or call for them. This last signal is of questionable utility.

THE FORCE

When strong in trumps, force your partner to trump, unless he has already led or called for

them; when not strong enough to lead them, force the adverse strong trump hand, thus weakening it perhaps beyond the point at which trumps could be led. But by no means force both opponents at the same time, as the weaker will make a small trump, while the stronger throws off a losing card.

Holding less than four trumps, an honor, do not force your partner, except to secure a perfectly evident cross-ruff, or to secure the trick necessary to win or perhaps to save the game, unless, by his play, he has indicated weakness in trumps, or your adversaries have indicated strength. The last exception is rather an excuse than a justification. If partner has led from a single card or two weak cards, or, having been already forced, has not trumped out, force him whenever you can.

CHAPTER VI

THE PLAY (*Continued*)

POSITION

WHIST is a game of calculation, observation, and position or tenace.

Calculation teaches you to plan your game and lead originally to advantage: before a card is played, you suppose the dealer to have an honor and three other trumps; the others each an honor and two others. The least reflection will show that, as it is two to one that your partner has not a named card, to lead on the supposition he has it is to play against calculation; whereas, the odds being in favor of his having one of two named cards, you are justified in playing accordingly. Calculation is also of use on other occasions; . . . but, after a few leads have taken place, it is nearly superseded by observation. Where the sets are really good players, before half the cards are played out they are as well acquainted with the material ones remaining in each other's hands as if they had seen them. Where two regular players are matched against two irregular ones, it is nearly the same advantage as if they were permitted to

see each other's cards, while the latter were denied the same privilege.

It is an axiom that the nearer your play approaches to what is called the dumb man the better.

These may be called the foundation of the game, and are so merely mechanical that any one possessed of a tolerable memory may attain them.

After which comes the more difficult science of position, or the art of using the two former to advantage, without which, it is self-evident, they are of no use. Attentive study and practice will, in some degree, insure success; but genius must be added before the whole finesse of the game can be acquired.—MATTHEWS.

TENACE

Hoyle says, "Tenace is possessing the first- and third-best cards, and being last player;" Matthews, "When the last to play holds the best and third-best of a suit." "Last to play" and "last player" are here used only relatively to the holder of the second-best; so that their definitions really mean that tenace is the holding of best and third-best unplayed of any suit, under such circumstances that the lead must come up to them from or through the holder of second-best. The same term was also used to indicate the position wherein a player might be so led up to regardless, or in ignorance, of what cards he held. Cavendish, Clay, *et id genus omne*, in defining, limit the meaning of tenace to the hold-

ing of the cards irrespective of position. Pole adds, "The essence of the tenace, which gives the character and importance to the combination, is that if the holder of the tenace is last player, he must (bar trumping) make tricks with both the cards." Ames, in his excellent treatise, uses the term indifferently to express either the holding of the cards or the holding of the position; and Cavendish uses it in the latter sense in his "Card-table Talks." As a matter of scientific accuracy, it is to be regretted that separate terms cannot be assigned to these separate meanings; for instance, major fourchette for best and third-best; minor fourchette for second- and fourth-best; vantage, the position; major tenace, the combination of major fourchette and vantage; and minor tenace, minor fourchette and vantage.

"Good old Matthews" says of tenace, as he defines it, "Though it is often necessary to relinquish it for more certain advantages, still no man can be a Whist-player who does not fully understand it." It is evident that if the holder of second-best, singly guarded, has to lead or play up to the major tenace, he loses both tricks; if led up to, he wins one. Very many of the stratagems of the play are based upon this principle, which applies to an almost infinite variety of combinations. A trick may often be

advantageously sacrificed in order that yourself or partner may, through tenace, win two. The following are simple illustrations:

You may hold a good plain suit and four trumps, an honor; your partner's lead may be trumped (high) by the second player; and you, though void of the suit, may refuse to over-trump. You thus increase the value of your own trumps, increase the probability of establishing and bringing in your long suit, and make your partner last player in an adversary's suit, wherein he may hold best and third-best or second-best singly guarded. Or, in the last three tricks (trumps being out, and yourself as last player holding best, fourth-best, and one small of a suit not before opened), to lead of second-best you should put on the small one, thus retaining tenace and winning two tricks. So, too, in like holding of the unplayed trumps. Or, having the lead, and holding ace and queen of two plain suits and one losing trump (the only other trump being held by your left-hand opponent, and the other plain suit having been played out), by leading the losing trump you certainly make not less than three tricks in your own hand; otherwise you could be sure of but two. The following is a little more complicated. Toward the last of the hand it may become evident that you are likely to be left with the best,

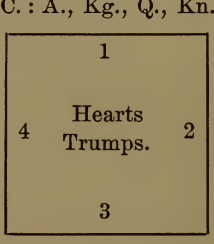
third-best, and one small in trumps, while your right-hand adversary will hold the second- and fourth-best or the second-best singly guarded, no other trumps remaining. Here you should contrive to get rid of your small trump before the eleventh trick (even by trumping a trick already belonging to your partner, or by throwing it upon a trick already covered by a higher trump), holding in its place a losing card of some plain suit, in order that you may be led up to in the twelfth trick instead of being obliged to lead. This is called *le grand coup*, and the occasion for it may occur to you perhaps three or four times in a lifetime.

Two historic coups are here presented, not merely as curiosities, but as highly instructive illustrations of position play at its best. The first, known as the Duke of Cumberland's Hand, beautifully exemplifies the merits of the Eleven Rule, tenace, and a long weak plain suit when duly supported by superior strength in trumps. It further demonstrates that even such a combination as a magnificent hand, the original lead, and correct play cannot always be relied upon to win. The duke, as first player, led his fourth-best trump (seven of hearts), the absolutely correct play, but necessarily failed to take a trick. He is said to have lost twenty thousand pounds upon the hand. It was played be-

fore the invention of American Leads, Eleven Rule, or Echo. The original play is given, but the reader may profitably amuse himself by bringing the play up to date, which will in no way interfere with the result. The second, known as the Vienna Coup, occurred in a game of double dummy. The first player, on examining his cards, exclaimed that he would take every trick. Large bets were made against him, but he performed the feat. The play is not given. Let the reader solve the problem for himself, with the assurance that, when he has learned all that these two coups can teach, he will find himself fairly well qualified to play winning Whist.

THE DUKE OF CUMBERLAND'S HAND

H. : Kg., Kn., 9, 7.
S. : A., Kg.
D. : A., Kg., Q.
C. : A., Kg., Q., Kn.



H. : 6, 5, 4, 3, 2.
D. : 5, 4, 3, 2.
C. : 5, 4, 3, 2.

H. : A., Q., 10, 8.
S. : 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2.

S. : Q., Kn.
D. : Kn., 10, 9, 8, 7, 6.
C. : 10, 9, 8, 7, 6.

In the following table of the play of the first six tricks, No. 1 leads the seven of hearts. The card winning each trick is indicated by a dot.

	No. 1.				No. 2.				No. 3.				No. 4.			
	H.	S.	D.	C.	H.	S.	D.	C.	H.	S.	D.	C.	H.	S.	D.	C.
1	7				8·							6	2			
2		Kg				2				Kn			3·			
3	9				10·							7	4			
4		A				3				Q			5·			
5	Kn				Q·							8	6			
6	Kg				A·											

No. 2, being in the lead at the seventh trick, leads his sequence of spades from the head down, taking a trick with every card. Nos. 2 and 4 win every trick.

THE VIENNA COUP

Clubs are trumps. No. 1 leads. Nos. 1 and 2 take every trick.

C. : A., Kg., Q., 3.
H. : 2.
S. : A., Q.
D. : A., Q., 7, 6, 4, 3.

C. : Kn., 10, 9.
H. : 8, 4.
S. : 9, 8, 7, 5, 4, 2.
D. : Kg., 9.

C. : 8, 6, 5.
H. : 10, 9, 7, 6, 5.
S. : Kg., 6.
D. : Kn., 10, 8.

C. : 7, 4, 2.
H. : A., Kg., Q., Kn., 3.
S. : Kn., 10, 3.
D. : 5, 2.

FINESSE

Finesse is the attempt by the second or third player to win a trick with a card of the suit led, other than the highest in hand, the location of

the intermediate cards being unknown. The term is sometimes loosely applied to cases of like play when the intermediate cards are placed.

Finesse may be deeper in trumps than in plain suits; deeper in plain suits after the trumps are out, or when the long trumps are in hand, than before; deeper in your own or adversary's suit than in your partner's, except that a short suit led by your partner may be treated as your own; and deepest of all in your partner's weakest suit, led to you after the adversaries have drawn the trumps of yourself and partner, remaining with the long ones themselves. In the first round of partner's original lead, of trumps or otherwise, the only justifiable finesse is queen from ace, queen, or knave from ace, queen, knave.

When very strong in trumps, you may finesse more freely in your partner's suit than at other times; and when very weak in trumps, or with none at all, you should finesse deeply in suits in which you believe him to be weak, in order to protect him as long as possible from a force. You may sometimes be guided to a successful finesse by application of the Eleven Rule. Finesse is unpardonable when one trick wins the game, or, except with known strength, when one trick saves it. It is commonly against but one card; but with second- and fourth-best, best at

your left, finesse fourth-best. The following is from Clay's treatise on Short Whist:

Again, say that you have led from king, nine, and small cards, and that your partner, having taken with the queen, returns to you the eight. . . . You know that he has returned to you the best card he holds in the suit, and that you have to contend not only against the ace, which you know to be behind you, but against the knave and the ten, neither of which cards can be with your partner. The position is difficult, but there is no help for it. You must pass your partner's eight. It is a finesse against two cards; but one, or possibly both of them, may be with your right-hand adversary, in each of which cases you will have played to advantage, and even in the worst case, viz., that you find both knave and ten, along with the ace, behind you, you have yet retained your king guarded and have not given up the entire command of the suit.

This leads to the consideration of another numerous class of cases, which, although not unsimilar, cannot strictly be called finesse. Take the same cards as given in the last example. Your partner equally takes with the queen and returns the eight, but your right-hand adversary renounces the suit. You now know that the ace, ten, and knave are all three behind you, and it is true that there is no finesse against a hand which has none of the suit played. Still, you would be very wrong to play your king. You must pass your partner's eight, and you still hold your king guarded, which prevents your left-hand adversary from going on with the suit, without either giving up its command or forcing his partner. Your king, thus guarded, may still be of great value to you, as your partner will certainly not continue the suit, and your right-hand adversary cannot. To have

played your king would have given the entire command of the suit to your left-hand adversary, than which no position could be worse. Cases similar to this are of frequent occurrence, and should be treated on this principle.

Clay likewise says, "With ordinary hands, finesse may be deep at their commencement, should contract as they go on, until, in the last four or five cards, there is scarcely any opportunity left for finesse, properly so called."

UNDERPLAY

Underplay consists in leading a low card of your left-hand adversary's suit, while retaining the best in your own hand. The object of the play is to induce him to play low, second hand, instead of putting on second-best, if he holds it, whereby your partner would have an even chance of winning the trick and you would remain in command of the suit. The opportunity usually occurs by reason of your winning a trick in your left-hand adversary's suit. When this is the case, if you can retain the lead in some other suit, better lead that for a round or two before returning your adversary's, as he may then be less suspicious. This stratagem is more effective against an indifferent player than against either a good one or a beginner.

HOLDING UP

This is a species of underplay, and consists in retaining the best card in hand for a round or two in order to play it with greater effect later. It is quite effective when used with good judgment, particularly in the trump suit, or in plain suits after the trumps are out.

PLACING THE LEAD

With a wretchedly weak hand, having by any chance obtained the lead, and having no information concerning your partner's strong suit, if the previous play of the adversaries and an inspection of your own hand cannot guide you to it with any satisfactory degree of probability, it would be well to lead from a suit of which you know your right-hand opponent to hold the best, in order that he may be obliged to open a suit in which your partner may be strong and will certainly have the advantage of position. Desiring the advantage of tenace yourself, it may sometimes be expedient, toward the close of the hand, to drop a trick to your left-hand adversary if he must or probably will lead your suit.

Whenever, at the end of the hand, you hold the best and third-best trumps or second-best

guarded over the player at your right, he having the lead, be sure to get rid of the control of his plain suit before the eleventh trick. The play will be similar to unblocking (concerning which later), but in an adversary's suit. Matthews is such excellent authority upon these points that no excuse is necessary for another citation:

You are not only to take every method to preserve the tenace or advantage of the position to yourself when it is evident that the winning cards lie between you and your adversary, but also to give it as much as possible to your partner when you perceive the strength in any suit is in the hands of him and your left-hand adversary; always keeping in your mind that when the latter or you lead the tenace is against, if your partner lead it is for, the adversary. It frequently happens that, by winning your partner's trick, when last player, you accomplish this. . . .

The following critical stroke decided one of the most material rubbers that was ever played, and is recommended to the attentive perusal even of proficients:

The parties were at nine. A had won six tricks, and remained, with knave and a small trump and two diamonds, with the lead; B, his left-hand adversary, with the queen and ten of trumps and two clubs; C, his partner, with two small trumps and two diamonds; D, last player, with ace and a small trump, a club and a heart. A led a diamond, which, being passed by B, was to be won by D. Query: How is D to play to make it possible to win the odd trick? Answer: D saw it was not possible, unless his partner had either the two best trumps or the first and third with a successful finesse. He therefore

trumped with the ace, led the small one, and won the game. . . . In another score of the game this would not be justifiable, as the chance of losing a trick is greater than that of gaining one by it.

Here is another case, known as Deschapelles' Coup, from Cavendish:

All the adversaries' and partner's trumps are exhausted, and the leader's partner remains with an established suit. If the leader (not having any of his partner's suit left) is obliged to open a fresh suit headed by king, queen, or knave, he should lead the highest card, irrespective of the number of cards he holds in the suit, that being the best chance of subsequently procuring the lead for his partner in case his only card of entry in that suit should be an honor, not the ace. . . .

Deschapelles' Coup often succeeds in practice, but it may generally be defeated by an attentive player. When the above-described position of the cards occurs the adversary, if he has the ace of the fresh suit led, should not put it on first round. The suit will, in all probability, be continued with a low card, when the third player will most likely be compelled to play his highest, which will be taken by the ace; and, having lost the card of reëntry, he never brings in his suit unless he gets the lead in some other way.

CHAPTER VII

THE PLAY (*Concluded*)

UNBLOCKING

THIS feature of the play is no innovation, Hoyle having devoted a number of positions to illustrating the theory and practice; all of which may be summed up in saying: Get rid of the command of your partner's long plain suit as soon as feasible, retaining if possible a small card with which to return him the lead. Do not hesitate to put your king on your partner's ace, or *vice versa*, when necessary in order to unblock. Holding a suit of four to your partner's five, you should so plan your play as to get rid of your last commanding card on the third round, retaining your lowest to return to partner; e.g., to your partner's leads, when not attempting to win either of the first two tricks, put on your third-best first round, your second-best second round, and your best third round.

This manner of play is called the plain-suit echo. With three of your partner's suit, the second round should complete your unblocking; with but two, put the commanding card on the first trick. When it is evident to you that your partner's lead is from a short suit or one no longer than your own, do not unblock unless, in some exceptional case, to deceive the enemy.

THE DISCARD

When unable to follow suit and unable or not desiring to trump, unless signaling, the original discard should generally be the lowest card of your weakest suit; and it is a notice to partner not to lead that suit unless very strong in it himself. The chief exception to the rule is this: When it seems apparent that the strength of the trump suit is in the hands of your opponents (as indicated by a trump lead or call, or, more equivocally, by refusing to trump a doubtful trick, etc.), the original discard should be from the longest suit, both as a matter of defensive play and for the specific information of partner. Should one of the adversaries and partner both call for trumps, the discard should be made according to the indications of the last signal. Trumps having been led by both, let the discard conform to the strength indicated

by the play; if adverse, it should be from the long, otherwise from the short, suit. But do not, in general, leave single an honor in discarding unless the strength in trumps appears to be with yourself and partner and your suit has not been indicated.

The reason for the rule is this: If the strength in trumps is with you, it is for your interest to preserve your long suit intact, and direct your partner to it by every means in your power, on the chance that you may be able to establish and bring it in; but if the trumps are against you this is not practicable, and you should assume the defensive by retaining what strength you have in the suits that are probably those of your adversaries.

When yourself and partner know each other to be weak in trumps, discards to an adverse lead may be made to deceive the adversary; to partner's lead, always for the information of partner. With full command of any suit, you may, in discarding, signal in it if partner has no trumps or knows that you have none. A discard of the best of an unopened suit indicates that you have full command of it; a discard of the second-best that you have no more of the suit. Toward the close of a hand, the lead of the last trump or other certain winning card will sometimes oblige an adversary to unguard an honor

or to break a fourchette. This is called a forced discard, and is the key to many coups.

THE ELEVEN RULE

The substance of this rule (first discovered by Mr. R. F. Foster, of New York) has already been stated. The original lead of a fourth-best card or the secondary lead of a fifth-best indicates that there are three better remaining in hand, the secondary lead of fourth-best indicating two; subtracting the number of pips, on the fourth-best, from eleven, or, in case of fifth-best, from ten (third-best from twelve), the remainder shows the whole number of better cards in that suit not held by the leader. A glance in hand and close attention to the play upon the first trick, or first and second, will sometimes locate them very closely; and so, too, at times with the remainder of the suit.

This development constitutes the greatest modern contribution to "the conversation of the game." It should be borne in mind, however, that conversation without action is typical of weakness rather than strength; that the knowledge of *what* is of little avail unless backed by the applied knowledge of *how*. The Whist of Hoyle, Matthews, Deschapelles, and Clay, wherein the ingenuity was directed to percep-

tion and play rather than to displaying or reading an elaborate conventional code of signals, has never been much improved upon. The reproach oftenest applied to the modern system is the allegation that the ability developed for play is, in general, much inferior to that acquired for signaling. That system, however, does tend to create a host of acceptable partners for experts, which is a boon to both, making life much pleasanter for the fine players, and they, in turn, for their partners.

CUI BONO?

Having now presented the rules for the lead and the general principles of the game and its play, it remains to be said that those rules, in their strictness, apply only to the beginning, to that stage in the play when the location of the cards actually held by the different players is a matter of arbitrary assumption rather than of inferential knowledge. None of them but must yield at times to the ascertained circumstances of the different hands. Here, as elsewhere, theory must give place to fact. When confronted by "a condition, not a theory," your play should promptly conform to the existing condition. When in doubt concerning the facts, probability is the guide.

Finally, with the play as with the leads, you are bound to make the plays prescribed for the information of partner only when you have one who will profit by them. With a partner who understands neither the principles nor the practice of the combined play of the hands, you are not bound by the rules therefor further than they may happen to be for your individual advantage. Play your own hand for all it is worth, and afford such incidental assistance to your partner as your capacity for guessing may enable you to do. If he is one who hoards up his trumps in order to return your lead if you make it, or merely to follow suit to the lead of an adversary, force him whenever you can. Under all such circumstances your object should be, not to demonstrate to your adversaries that you understand how to play the game according to the latest developments of scientific conventionality, but to win from them if possible; if not, to keep down their winnings. In other words, if estopped from making your game "a scientific contest for points," better adopt the "rough-and-tumble" tactics. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain thereby.

CHAPTER VIII

PLAY OF THE WEAK HAND

Weakness to be wroth with weakness!
TENNYSON.

The attentive perusal (in the mode prescribed) of these [the preceding] maxims will, I think, with a little practice, enable a beginner to play with very good cards to considerable advantage. The difficulty of the game does not consist in this; for aces and kings will make tricks, and no skill can make a ten win a knave.—MATTHEWS.

SUITS are roughly classified as strong or weak (more accurately, long or short), according to whether they comprise four or more cards, or three or less; and the leads are adapted to this classification. More properly, strength of suit should be recognized as consisting of a greater than an average number of high cards. This is intrinsic strength. Length of suit alone is an element of strength only when combined with intrinsic strength in other suits, notably the trump suit; otherwise it is an element of weak-

ness. With a plain suit of thirteen cards in hand, it is impossible to take a trick; so, too, with a hand composed of two plain suits, one from the deuce to the eight, both inclusive, and the other from the deuce to the seven. It is likewise the same with a hand composed of three plain suits, one from the deuce to the six, and each of the others from the deuce to the five inclusive. Mere length of suit does not confer intrinsic strength, except in trumps. Combined with trump strength, it is far otherwise; for an example of which see the second hand in the coup entitled "The Duke of Cumberland's Hand," in a preceding chapter.

Hands may, in like manner, be styled strong or weak, according to whether or not they contain a strong (long) trump suit; for "the trump suit is the most important thing in the game of Whist." Upon this classification depends the general management of the hand. Matthews cites, with approval, the maxim, "Never play a strong game with a weak hand, or *vice versa*." A strong game (or a "great game," in the language of Hoyle and Payne) consists in playing with reference to drawing the adverse trumps in order to bring in an established long suit; contradistinguished from this, by the Long-Whist authorities, was "playing for the odd trick."

To the former plan of campaign the conven-

tional systems of leads and the great majority of the resulting rules for play are adapted; hence the play of the strong hand is first and most readily learned. Nevertheless more than half of the time (about 58.5 times in 100 consecutive deals) the player probably finds himself with three, or less, trumps in hand. Here Cavendish comes to the rescue with this maxim: "With a strong trump hand, play your own game; with a weak trump hand, play your partner's game." Of course superior strength in trumps is properly applied, by leading them, to disarming the enemy and bringing in the established plain suit. When weak in trumps, if partner is strong, they may (if reasonably high) be very useful in strengthening, supporting, and returning his suit and lead; but if low are most useful for ruffing (trumping) plain suits. But it frequently happens (about 34 times in 100 consecutive deals) that partner, himself being likewise weak, has no (strong) game to play. And at this point, in consequence, no road appearing to lead in a satisfactory direction, beginners frequently "take to the woods" and get lost. In truth, there is no royal road to taking tricks without holding winning cards: weakness cannot be made superior to strength. The art of Whist, as of war, consists in being the stronger at the point of contact. There are, of course,

various gradations of strength, as of weakness, which, at their point of least difference, merge and shade into one another. In plain suits, a sequence of the three highest cards is stronger than one of the four lowest; and of hands, one containing the three highest trumps with the command of the three plain suits is stronger than one composed of the four lowest trumps and only losing cards in the plain suits. There is an indeterminate point where these different kinds of strength are equalized. The effective strength of a hand may be in its trumps, its plain suits, or temporarily in its position. Strength of some kind it must have, or it is not a winning factor in the game. What is thus true of one hand is doubly true of the combined hands of partners.

The final problem of the play of the weak hand is in what manner to obtain for it the full benefit of whatever of these three elements of strength it contains or may be made to have. With overwhelming strength, minor matters of detail may be ignored; with prevailing weakness, no possible advantage is too minute to be dismissed without consideration. All this involves a knowledge of details and an attention to the play which can only be outlined here, and must be learned in their fulness, if at all, by painstaking practice.

The proposition awaiting consideration concerns the course to be pursued when both partners are weak in trumps. Here, in the majority of cases, they must be beaten. They may sometimes win, however, and may always keep down as much as possible the winnings of their opponents. The tactics are the same in both cases, and are of the "leave-no-stone-unturned" order. If the hand has been opened by drawing all the adverse trumps, some remaining to the strong hands, it is settled that when one of the opposing players gets the lead he should open not his own strongest suit, but his partner's, in the absence of any other indication thereof, leading from his own weakest suit, or, if holding two weak plain suits, whichever of them seems more advantageous. The partner should finesse deeply, and, if he wins the trick, return in like manner the suit in which he believes his partner to be strong, thus, when successful, establishing a see-saw in plain suits. It is likewise settled that each player should finesse deeply in the suit in which he believes his partner to be weak, in order to protect it.

There remains that vexatious class of cases wherein both partners are weak in trumps, one having the lead before trumps have been led or strength in trumps in any way indicated. Here, according to the prevailing conventionality, the

original lead should be from the strongest suit, unless it has been previously opened by the enemy; in which case the next-best suit should generally be chosen. With but three, or less, small trumps and an unpromising suit (particularly with an adverse deal and unfavorable run of the cards), if still in the dark, the second lead is a more troublesome problem. If the original suit is continued, the enemy, if strong, must soon win the lead and trump out; whereby those small trumps will be sacrificed and the sacrifice afterward probably extended to the other elements of the hand.

Here we will cast back further. In 1770 Payne so far forecast the modern conventional play as to strike its key-note in saying, "Begin with the suit of which you have the most in number." He likewise made the following recommendation: "Suppose yourself leader, with three small trumps, one strong suit, one moderate suit, and a single card; begin with the strong suit, and next lead the single card." The singleton is played, of course, in order that partner, if he has nothing decidedly better in view, may return the suit last led, so that the first player may have an opportunity to make a small trump or two. The unnecessary change of suit to lead the singleton is a confession of weakness, but one which could probably not long be de-

ferred and is hardly more objectionable on that score than various other plays. Much must depend upon the capacity of partner and opponents. With skilled adversaries it is a hazardous expedient, not to be indulged in rashly. Cavendish says:

> It is in most cases unquestionably disadvantageous to you that the whole table should be aware of your being very weak in a particular suit, and, consequently, information of weakness should be withheld as long as possible. . . .
>
> When you are unfortunately tied to an untaught partner, especially if at the same time you are pitted against observant adversaries, you should expose your hand as little as possible, particularly in respect of minor details.

Clay, however, directs, "Let the first card you throw away be from your weakest suit. Your partner will take this as if you said to him, 'Do not lead this suit unless you have great strength in it yourself.'" Of course, however, such a discard gives a partial indication of the strong suit as well. But so by these two leads, from the strong suit and of the singleton, in proper cases partner is informed concerning the strongest plain suit, the one next in strength, that the leader is weak in trumps and void in the suit last led, which, if necessary and possible, must be protected by partner. He, having been fully informed, is left to act in the premises according

to the dictates of his own judgment and the composition of his own hand. If strong, let him play a strong game; if weak, he cannot adopt a contrary course too quickly.

The return of a singleton in the unplayed suit, if such there should be, might constitute an original lead from a single card, which is generally condemned by all modern authorities, chiefly as a false-card lead which must deceive one partner to the mutual injury of both. That objection could hardly apply in this case, the former leader substantially inviting such play, as a cross-ruff might thereby be established. Moreover, the combination from which it would become possible would occur so seldom that such practice could, even if adopted whenever practicable, hardly come under Clay's condemnation of such a lead "as a habit."

This, together with his concession that false cards might be played when the partner was so weak that no harm could be done by deceiving him, would go far toward justifying, in desperate cases, the original lead of a singleton, in connection with a short suit of small trumps, in most instances where it is permissible for a player to force his partner, though weak in trumps himself. The capacity of partner, of opponents, and the other circumstances of the case must determine in specially doubtful positions. Cavendish

says, "There is no Whist principle which should not be occasionally violated, owing to knowledge of the hands derived from inference during the play." All irregular play must, in general, stand or fall according to the result. All things are permitted to him whose perception and judgment are so keen and true as to enable him, in circumstances of difficulty, to accomplish a favorable result by departure from rule. This is the crown and glory of fine play. "Nothing succeeds like success," but "*væ victis!*"

When both partners are weak, the opening short-suit play of a sequence of ace, king, queen, if luckily in hand, would seem unexceptionable. There would be about an even chance of winning three immediate tricks, or, failing in that, of forcing the adverse strong trump hand. If the three tricks are taken, there still remains an opening for forcing play direct, or to establish a cross-ruff, as may seem most feasible. In general, any play which will establish and bring in a cross-ruff is justifiable and expedient.

In this class of cases, tricks should be made early and particular attention be given to obtaining every possible advantage from tenace; while finesse, except in partner's weak suit or the player's strong one, should be cautiously indulged in; so, too, with false cards. In fact, the old-time Long-Whist method of playing for the odd

trick so far as applicable may be adopted. Concerning this last, Matthews may once more be quoted:

> In playing for an odd trick, you play a closer game than at other scores. You lead from single cards and force your partner when, at another time, you would not be justified. It is seldom in this case proper to lead trumps, and few finesses are justifiable. It is a nice part of the game, and experience, with attention, will alone teach it with effect.

On winning a trick in an adverse trump lead, partner being weak in trumps and void in a plain suit, if he probably has a small trump left, force him first of all.

If partner is void in a plain suit and his strong suit has been indicated, but not led, if holding a singleton in the latter, it is sometimes best to lead it before forcing him, thus establishing a cross-ruff.

It has already been stated that at second hand, when weak in trumps, every opportunity for ruffing should be improved; also that when holding but one trump (if moderately high), with a good hand in all plain suits and in partner's deal, the single trump may sometimes be led to advantage. There are about 49 chances in 100 that partner will hold five or more trumps; and about 78 in 100 that he will hold four or more, while in the second round of that suit he

will draw two adverse trumps for one. He is thus unlikely to be seriously injured by such a lead or deceived by it to his disadvantage. But false cards may generally be played more freely in the adversaries' suits than in those of the original leader or his partner.

This chapter has been written to supply a want frequently experienced by a Whist-player at a certain point in his progress, when his play of a good hand has become reasonably regular and satisfactory, but that of many of the not infrequent bad ones is to him but a puzzle and a snare. A few of the more obvious expedients have been presented, involving more or less at least apparent infractions of some of the general rules of the play. There are none of them, however, but may be traced to some acknowledged authority; and if their use is limited to the instances cited, it is believed that no serious harm is likely to result therefrom. They are to be considered as a medicine rather than as a daily food.

Much of the material for this chapter has been derived from the earlier writers who treated of Long Whist. A reason for this may be found in the fact that the modern English authorities treat exclusively of Short Whist, a game of five points, with a possibility of winning four by honors, and an average of about two, leaving but three points to be won by play; while the

confessedly more scientific game of Long Whist, with its average of four points by honors and six by tricks, bears a much closer analogy to the American game of seven points, no honors, which is more scientific still. This condition is intensified in Whist for Continuous Points and Duplicate Whist. In the three latter games, a large part of the data accumulated by the later English authors becomes useless; while some of the methods of the old Long-Whist school may prove to be deserving of renewed attention.

CHAPTER IX

ON CHANCE AND CHANCES

Chance is a word void of sense; nothing can exist without a cause.—VOLTAIRE.

> All nature is but art unknown to thee;
> All chance, direction which thou canst not see.
>
> POPE.

Chance is usually spoken of in direct antithesis to law; whatever (it is supposed) cannot be ascribed to any law is attributed to chance. It is, however, certain that whatever happens is the result of some law, is an effect of causes, and could have been predicted from a knowledge of the existence of those causes, and from their laws. If I turn up a particular card, that is a consequence of its place in the pack. Its place in the pack was a consequence of the manner in which the cards were shuffled, or of the order in which they were played in the last game; which, again, were the effects of prior causes. At every stage, if we had possessed an accurate knowledge of the causes in existence, it would have been abstractedly possible to foretell the effect.—JOHN STUART MILL.

SHOULD the dealer, at Whist, take a pack in which the cards were separated into their several

suits, and (without knowledge of that fact on the part of himself or of any of the three other players) shuffle (by coupling the cards from top and bottom, going through the entire pack in that manner twice), and, after the cutting, deal them, each player would hold an entire suit. This remarkable result would be a typical matter of chance to all. Suppose, however, that the dealer alone had previously known the original arrangement of the suits in the pack and had intentionally adapted his shuffle thereto for the purpose of arriving at that result. The result would have been precisely the same. The only difference in the conditions would have been the knowledge of the dealer. To him the result would have been the effect of known causation, the product of fixed laws, a certainty; to the others, the same matter of chance as before. This instance is cited simply because of its simplicity and the readiness with which it can be verified; but, whatever the original arrangement of the cards, whatever the nature of the shuffle, whatever the character of the cut, the result of the deal depends upon them as its antecedent causes and is the same whether they are known or unknown. If they are known, that result is, to him who knows, the necessary effect of direct causation; to those who do not know those causes it is the product of chance. What is true in this

respect of the deal is likewise true of all other matters whatever.

Chance is the operation of unknown causes. It is neither necessary, desirable, nor proper to here elucidate the general theory further than is requisite to arrive at an understanding of its actual application to the game of Whist.

Much industry, learning, and ability have been devoted to the so-called calculation of chances; but there is no operation of figures by which ignorance can be transmuted into specific knowledge. The so-called Theory of Probabilities, so far as it has any foundation in fact, is really the theory of averages as applied to large numbers, not individual cases, and of greater or less value according to the greater or less number of instances from which it is derived and to which, in turn, it is applied. Knowledge of the composition of any particular unplayed hand can be legitimately acquired only by inspection (analysis) or inference (induction). The former is applicable only to the hands of the persons holding them, or to those of dummy; for the latter there is no sufficient basis except in double dummy. In ordinary Whist, as in other games of chance, it being impossible to ascertain the contents of the three unexposed hands either by analysis or induction, attempts are made to determine roughly their probable contents by

two processes—the calculation of chances, and an analysis of a series of hands actually dealt. The results of the calculation and of the analysis (while approximating more and more closely, in general, according to whether a comparatively small or comparatively large number of cases is involved) may not altogether agree, as the calculation is really based upon an infinite number of cases and the analysis upon a finite number. Neither affords a better basis for determining the contents of any particular unknown hand than does a perfectly unbiassed guess; for, the cards having been dealt, the contents of each hand are fixed, and no process of reasoning or calculation can alter the facts. It is not a matter of probability, but of fixed fact; it is another case of being confronted by a condition, not a theory. Nevertheless both the calculation and the analysis, which is practically a verification of the former, have their value, as will appear later.

Suppose one black and one white ball, alike in all but color, to be put into an urn, otherwise empty, from which one is to be drawn by a person blindfolded. The chance of drawing either is 1 in 2, called an equal or even chance, and expressed by the fraction $\frac{1}{2}$, whereof the numerator (1) expresses certainty, and the denominator (2) the number of chances to be taken. Now sup-

pose the black ball to have been drawn and retained in hand. It has become a certainty that another drawing would produce the white one.

Instead of the two, suppose that the urn contained six balls, alike in all but the fact that they are numbered from one to six. The chance of drawing, at the first attempt, any one of the numbers is 1 in 6, expressed by the fraction $\frac{1}{6}$. Suppose it was desired to draw No. 6, but that No. 1 was drawn and retained in hand. The chance of drawing No. 6 at the second trial would not be 1 in 6, but 1 in 5, $\frac{1}{5}$. Should some other number be then drawn and retained, the chance of drawing No. 6 at the third time becomes $\frac{1}{4}$. Under like circumstances, for the fourth time the chance would be $\frac{1}{3}$, the fifth, $\frac{1}{2}$, and the sixth, $\frac{1}{1}$ (1), or certainty.

These two cases illustrate one conception of the Theory of Probabilities as applied to our game. One of two equal chances having happened, many contend that it is practically certain, at least highly probable, that the other will occur the next time. So, too, in the case of 1 chance in 6 having failed five consecutive times, they contend that it is, in like manner, practically certain that it will occur at the sixth trial. Something like this has been styled the "Maturity of the Chances." If these assumptions are not true, its advocates would say, then is your theory

in conflict with your experience, and the original statement of the original chances must have been in some way erroneous.

But take an ordinary die and cast it with the desire of throwing six. The calculated chance of success is $\frac{1}{6}$. You may succeed, however, at the first trial; but if not, the number thrown still remains in the case, and the calculated chance at the second cast is $\frac{1}{6}$, as before, and so on *ad infinitum*.

Toss a coin for head or tail. The calculated chance is $\frac{1}{2}$. If at first you don't succeed, the calculated chance at the second toss is still $\frac{1}{2}$, and so on forever. In the absence of all knowledge concerning the conditions of the toss or cast, there is no calculable likelihood of one result more than another. Many combat this theory by claiming that its results are contradicted by experience; that the latter teaches that events, the happening of which is governed by an even chance, occur either alternately (first in one way and then in the other), or at least most frequently in a manner which does not deviate much from such order. Concerning this last proposition, R. A. Proctor, the celebrated astronomer, says:

> In casting a coin a great number of times, we do not find that the occurrence of a great number of successive heads or tails in any way affects the average proportion of heads or tails coming next after the series. Thus I

have before me the record of a series of 16,317 tossings, in which the number of sequences of tails (only) were rendered; and I find that after 271 cases, in which tails had been tossed 5 times in succession, the next tossing gave in 132 cases heads and in 139 cases tails. Among the 16,317 tossings, two cases occurred in which tail was tossed 15 times in succession, which, as it happens, is more than theory would regard as probable.

The first two illustrations and the last two may be made to coincide by supposing, in the two former, the ball drawn to be returned to the urn before the next drawing in every instance, making all analogous to the conditions affecting the result of a deal at Whist. To continue the illustration to be derived from tossing the coin, if both sides of the coin are of equal weight, there is no need to seek a better example of the occurrence of an even chance than would be furnished by the fair tossing of the same. If one side is heavier than the other, as is sometimes the case with that bearing the head, that side will more frequently be underneath, as seems to have been the case in the experiment cited by Proctor; for, with an equally balanced coin and fair tossing, the chance for heads or tails fifteen times in succession would have been but 1 in 32,768, not 2 in 16,317. Such a discrepancy cannot well be accounted for otherwise.

The calculation is as follows: With a fair coin

and fair toss, the chance of head or tail is equal, and expressed by the fraction $\frac{1}{2}$. The antecedent probability that a given event will happen twice in succession is found by multiplying by itself the fraction expressing the original chance. The chance that heads or tails would be thrown twice in succession would therefore be $\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{2} = \frac{1}{4}$; or, the single event having a probability of occurring once in one series of two tossings, the double event has a probability of occurring once in four series of two tossings. Thus, the numerator of the fraction constantly remaining at unity, representing certainty, the denominator in this case would be 2^2, or 4. The chance or probability of such an occurrence taking place three times in succession would be expressed by $\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{2} = \frac{1}{2}^3 = \frac{1}{8}$; and for fifteen times in succession, by $\frac{1}{2}$ multiplied by itself fifteen times, or $\frac{1}{2}^{15} = \frac{1}{32768}$. This, as has been before indicated, does not mean that a run of fifteen consecutive heads or tails must necessarily occur in the given number of casts, but that it probably would; and the larger the number of experimental casts, the more nearly will the results of the calculation and the experiment coincide. In a very large number of series of fifteen casts, a person constantly betting 32,767 to 1, against the success of the attempt to cast head fifteen times in succession, should have won just as much as he has lost; so, too, in con-

stantly betting a uniform sum, even, upon head as the result of each cast, or, in like manner, upon tail. The chance being even and the bet uniform, in a very large number of cases the cash account must balance.

How in case of discarding system and simply making a like bet founded upon unbiassed guesswork in each instance? Here it would seem that the player in a like number of cases should lose three times as much as he would win. Thus, if he has no greater reason for guessing one way than the other, it is always an even chance whether he guesses head or tail; it is likewise always an even chance which will be thrown. Therefore, the chance that he will guess heads being $\frac{1}{2}$, and that heads will be thrown being $\frac{1}{2}$, the combined chance that he will guess heads and that heads will be thrown in any instance, and *vice versa*, may be expressed by $\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{2} = \frac{1}{4}$, or 1 chance in 4, 3 to 1 against him.

Suppose the coin to be unequal to such an extent that tail is cast twice as frequently as head. One constantly betting upon tails would average winning twice in every three times; if betting upon heads, once in three times. How in case of unbiassed guesswork? Here the chance of his guessing tail and tail being thrown would be $\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{2}{3} = \frac{2}{6}$, or $\frac{1}{3}$. His best winning chance has become no better than his worst when adhering

to system; while that chance becomes proportionately worse, i.e., the chance of guessing head and that head will be thrown would be $\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{3} = \frac{1}{6}$, a winning chance of but 1 in 6, or adverse odds of 5 to 1.

Suppose the guess is not unbiassed. Suppose that the player has observed that tail is cast twice as frequently as head, and, not content with adhering to system and so winning twice out of three times, attempts to better his chance by guessing tail, say, twice as frequently as he does head. Here the best winning chance would be $\frac{2}{3} \times \frac{2}{3} = \frac{4}{9}$, and the worst, $\frac{1}{3} \times \frac{1}{3} = \frac{1}{9}$. The sum of his winning chances would be 4 in 9 guesses of tails, plus 1 in 9 guesses of heads, equalling 5 times in 18 casts, or $\frac{5}{18}$. By adhering to the winning system, his winning chance would have been 2 to 1; by introducing even systematic guesswork it would be, in this case, changed to 1 to $2\frac{3}{5}$, worse than reversed.

These suggestions and calculations are introduced, not because of their specific application to the game of pitch and toss, but because the principles embodied therein are of general application to games of chance, or chance and skill, among the latter of which is included Whist. In all such games a player can deserve success only by playing a system based upon an analysis of the game into its elements and a calculation

of its probabilities—in games of chance making his bets systematically in accordance with those probabilities, and in games of mingled chance and skill so directing his play in all cases wherein he has no information.

But, it may be objected, if this theory is correct, and barring games wherein skill may encounter superior skill, why, in games of pure chance, might not a system be devised which would certainly enable the player to win? The answer is, There has been. To return to pitch and toss, the simple expedient of doubling the bet after every loss, applied to constant betting upon the same one of two even chances, would, if persisted in, inevitably enable a player to win. The weak point of this old "martingale" is that, though a winner in the long run, repeated doubling will frequently reach the limit fixed by the pocket or upon the game before a short "run of luck" is exhausted. The winning chance is based upon an infinite series, and the losing upon a finite one.

A modification of this system, which promises better results, is open, though in far less degree, to the same objection. It is as follows: The preceding system of betting is based upon the fact that a single win will recoup all past losses and leave the player ahead of the game by the amount of his original losing wager, the latter

upon the principle that a single win will offset two losses. In a game of even chances a player should, in the long run, win as often as lose; and hence, in anything approaching that result, this system must certainly be a winner, limits being barred. Its crowning merit, however, consists in the fact that, judiciously played, there is but little likelihood of reaching a limit in a fair game. Let the player determine the amount which he will win in his original series of bets, bearing in mind that, in this case, modesty is an element of success. Suppose him to decide upon winning but $10, starting with a $5 bet. Let him take a blank card and set down, near its upper left-hand corner, 5–5; lower down, near the left-hand margin, let him write W. as an abbreviation for winnings; and below that, L., to represent losses. Then let him make his bet, which we will suppose him to lose. He must now write another 5 at the right of those in the upper line and also enter it after L. in the line for losses. He then adds together the figures at each end of the upper line, and wagers their amount, $10, constantly betting upon the same one of the two chances. This he also loses, writing 10 at the right of the upper line upon his card and also in the line for losses. He again adds together the figures at each end of the upper line, and wagers their amount, $15. This we will suppose that he wins and writes

in the line for winnings, cancelling the figures at the extremities of the upper line, 10 and 5. Let him continue losing twice in succession, then winning once, until, after the twelfth, which would be a winning wager, he also wins the thirteenth. All the figures in the upper line will now be cancelled. He will have lost eight times and won but five times. His aggregate losses will be found to be $135, his winnings $145, and he is $10 ahead of the game, Q. E. D. His highest bet was $45, and the result was inevitable, barring a limit in game or pocket. The card should be as follows, excepting the numbers of the wagers, which are here superimposed in each line, and except that the figures in the upper line should all be cancelled, the winning bets upon which the cancellation should have occurred being here indicated by the leger figures:

3 6 9 3 12 6 13 9 13 12
5–5–5–10–10–15–15–20–25–35

3 6 9 12 13
W. 15–20–25–45–40 = 145

1 2 4 5 7 8 10 11
L. 5–10–10–15–15–20–25–35 = 135

10

To show how even an infallible system may fare when it comes in collision with a table limit

(an irresistible force meeting an immovable body), attention is called to the following instance, wherein the player, determining to win $25, arranged his five 5's on the upper line of his card and commenced prosperously by winning his first four bets even. He then lost three times in succession, and thereafter alternately won once and lost twice until his nineteenth wager, a loss of $90. His next wager, pursuant to the system, should be $90 + $25 = $115, which is in excess of the customary table limit of $100, which obtains, at option of the banker, in some of the larger and less disreputable establishments. It is true that he may wager the limit with an even chance of winning; but, even if he does so and wins, he must again wager the limit in order to extricate himself, and the antecedent probability of success in both events is but 1 in 4. Should he win one wager and lose one, he is, so far as his system is concerned, still more involved; at best he can but continue betting, with an even chance of winning individual wagers, instead of pursuing a system which would give a certainty of success, unless he accepts the fact that his system has broken down and quits or commences anew; either of which involves a loss on his first series of $195, the excess of losses over winnings. His card will be less satisfactory than the first, but at least equally in-

structive; and, subject to the same explanations and exceptions as before, will be as follows:

	1	2	3	4	8	11	14	8	17	11		14		17			
	5–	5–	5–	5–	5–	5–	10–	15–	15–	20–	25–	35–	40–	55–	65–	90	
		1	2	3	4	8	11	14	17								
W.	5–	5–	5–	5–	20–	25–	45–	70						= 180			
																	195
		5	6	7	9	10	12	13	15	16	18	19					
L.	5–	10–	15–	15–	20–	25–	35–	40–	55–	65–	90	= 375					

To return briefly to the consideration of the somewhat popular but erroneous proposition that events, the happening of which is governed by an even chance (as in the tossing of a coin), occur either actually or approximately in alternation, the attention of the reader is invited to the following table, which shows all the possible different combinations resulting from six consecutive tossings of a coin. These are sixty-four, the chance of each being $\frac{1}{64}$. So far from substantial alternation being the rule, it will be found that the chance for a run of three or more in any series of six is 19 to 13, or 59 in 100; that the chance of head, tail, or *vice versa*, throughout such a series is but 1 to 63, which is precisely that of heads or tails six times in succession. Nevertheless, in the entire aggregation of combinations, head is represented precisely as many times as tail, being 192 times in a total of 384.

COMBINATIONS.												
H	H	H	H	H	H	T	T	T	T	T	T
H	H	H	H	H	T	T	T	T	T	T	H
H	H	H	H	T	T	T	T	T	T	H	H
H	H	H	T	T	T	T	T	T	H	H	H
H	H	T	T	T	T	T	T	H	H	H	H
H	T	T	T	T	T	T	H	H	H	H	H
H	T	H	H	H	H	T	H	T	T	T	T
H	H	T	H	H	H	T	T	H	T	T	T
H	H	H	T	H	H	T	T	T	H	T	T
H	H	H	H	T	H	T	T	T	T	H	T
H	T	T	H	H	H	T	H	H	T	T	T
H	H	T	T	H	H	T	T	H	H	T	T
H	H	H	T	T	H	T	T	T	H	H	T
H	T	T	T	H	H	T	H	H	H	T	T
H	H	T	T	T	H	T	T	H	H	H	T
H	T	T	T	T	H	T	H	H	H	H	T
H	T	H	T	T	T	T	H	T	H	H	H
H	T	H	T	T	H	T	H	T	H	H	T
H	T	H	T	H	H	T	H	T	H	T	T
H	T	H	T	H	T	T	H	T	H	T	H
H	H	T	H	T	H	T	T	H	T	H	T
H	H	H	T	H	T	T	T	T	H	T	H
H	H	T	H	H	T	T	T	H	T	T	H
H	H	T	H	T	T	T	T	H	T	H	H
H	H	T	T	H	T	T	T	H	H	T	H
H	T	T	H	T	T	T	H	H	T	H	H
H	T	T	H	H	T	T	H	H	T	T	H
H	T	T	H	T	H	T	H	H	T	H	T
H	T	T	T	H	T	T	H	H	H	T	H
H	T	H	H	T	H	T	H	T	T	H	T
H	T	H	H	T	T	T	H	T	T	H	H
H	T	H	H	H	T	T	H	T	T	T	H

As in the preceding table the probability of the happening of any one of the 64 different series of six is the same as that of any other ($\frac{1}{2}^6$), so in Whist any one combination of the entire 52 cards is just as probable as any other. Thus the probability that each hand will contain one entire suit is neither more nor less than for the occurrence of any other named combination comprising all of the cards. According to Dr. Pole's computations (ignoring the changes resulting from changing the trump or interchanging the respective hands), the total number of different ways in which the 52 cards may be distributed among the four players is

53, 644, 737, 765, 488, 792, 839, 237, 440, 000.

This is a sum which renders it highly probable that a player will never be dealt two hands exactly alike. It throws, too, a flood of light upon the following statements of the same author:

People fancy they can become good players by mere practice, which is a great mistake; they only move on in one eternal blundering round. The philosophical game has been the result of years upon years of elaborate thought and incessant experiment, and you can no more arrive at it by your own limited experience than you could become acquainted with modern scientific astronomy by watching for a few weeks the apparent motion of the stars.

Though Shakespeare wrote, "Experience is the school where men learn wisdom," if one were inclined to moralize the thought might occur, if the above is true of the possible combinations of 52 cards, divided into four hands of 13 each, what is the relative value of individual experience, as compared with general philosophy, in the myriad happenings of daily life? Who has the best of it, the empiric or the philosopher? "What is a philosopher? One who opposes nature to law, reason to usage, conscience to opinion, and his judgment to error."

Another table is added, showing the probability, before the deal, of winning or losing tricks in each deal. It also shows the actual results of the play of 1666 hands transposed to the basis of 8192 for comparison (showing the effect of volition upon chance), and as reduced to the proportion of 1000 hands in each case to indicate the percentage. The data for the same, both calculation and experiment, were found in Dr. William Pole's "Philosophy of Whist." Of course when one side does not take a trick, the other has thirteen, and *vice versa*. So, too, with reference to all other combinations.

PROBABILITY OF WINNING TRICKS.

Calculation.		Experiment.	Calculation.		Experiment.	
Tricks.	Times.	Times.	Tricks.	Times.	Times.	Tricks.
0	1	17	13	000	002	0
1	13	91	12	002	011	1
2	78	243	11	010	030	2
3	286	455	10	035	056	3
4	715	870	9	087	106	4
5	1287	1062	8	157	129	5
6	1716	1357	7	209	166	6
7	1716	1357	6	209	166	7
8	1287	1062	5	157	129	8
9	715	870	4	087	106	9
10	286	455	3	035	056	10
11	78	243	2	010	030	11
12	13	91	1	002	011	12
13	1	17	0	000	002	13
	8192	8190		1000	1000	

Many other specific applications, to our game, of the Theory of Probabilities, are reserved for the following chapter; but it may be well to suggest here that, with three, four, or five cards in suit, it is better than an even chance that the suit will go round twice; with three in suit, that it will go round three times about 28 times in 100; and with four in suit, about 11 times. Of course about one third of the time the partner of the leader should renounce on the third round, giving better than an even chance of getting a trick with the best of a short suit third round. Matthews says, "The following calculations are sufficient for a beginner; deeper ones frequently puzzle even the proficient.

"That either player has not one named card not in your hand is

				2 to 1
5 to 4	in	favor	of his having	1 of 2
5 to 2	"	"	"	1 in 3
4 to 1	"	"	"	1 in 4."

In conclusion, attention is once more invited to the fact that the calculation of chances, as applied to Whist, is not and does not profess to be a means for determining by mathematical operations the specific contents of any particular hand or hands. It merely indicates the probable results of steadfast adherence to a fixed system of play, and the probable average contents of an infinite number of hands. On this point John Stuart Mill expresses himself as follows:

> A general average should only be applied to a case which is neither known, nor can be presumed, to be other than an average case. Such averages, therefore, are commonly of little use for the practical guidance of any affairs but those which concern large numbers. Tables of the chances of life are useful to insurance offices, but they go a very little way towards informing any one of the chances of his own life or any other life in which he is interested, since almost every life is either better or worse than the average.

For determining the contents of any specific hand all such general computations and averages are of no value whatever. As the basis of all

scientific play they are simply indispensable. Froude, the historian, says, "Philosophy goes no further than probabilities, and in every assertion keeps a doubt in reserve." The following is from Best's admirable work, "The Principles of the Law of Evidence":

The mathematical calculus of probabilities, or Doctrine of Chances, has, as is well known, been found of essential service in various political and social matters apparently unconnected with the exact sciences. . . .

"La plupart de nos jugements," says one of the most distinguished writers upon it [La Place], "étant fondés sur la probabilité des témoignages, il est bien important de la soumettre au calcul. La chose, il est vrai, devient souvent impossible, par la difficulté d'apprécier la véracité des témoins, et par le grand nombre de circonstances dont les faits qu'ils attestent sont accompagnés. Mais on peut, dans plusiers cas, résoudre de problèmes qui ont beaucoup d'analogie avec les questions qu'on se propose, et dont les solutions peuvent être regardées comme des approximations propres à nous guider, et à nous garantir des erreurs et des dangers auxquels de mauvais raisonnements nous exposent. Une approximation de ce genre, lorsqu'elle est bien conduite, est toujours préférable aux raisonnements les plus spécieux."

The calculus of probabilities has accordingly been applied, in English treatises on evidence, to hypothetical states of facts to illustrate the value of different kinds of evidence.

CHAPTER X

PLAY OF THE ELDEST HAND

I cannot omit one observation: Though with good players the lead nearly counterbalances the advantages of the deal, with bad ones it is of little or no advantage; of course it increases that of the dealer. The first lead in both games [Long and Short Whist] requires judgment, and is so little comprehended that it is generally twelve to one a wrong card is played, and the fate of the whole hand frequently depends upon it.—MATTHEWS.

THE preceding chapters, so far as relating to the play, are strictly orthodox. This one, on hasty reading, may be considered rank heresy; yet it is hoped that unprejudiced investigation will prove that, in this case as in many others, the supposed heresy consists merely in logically extending the application of the cardinal tenets of the true and accepted doctrine. Any apparent latitudinarianism herein is to be ascribed to the writer's understanding of the influence of the deal upon the distribution of the different

suits in the several hands, that of the trump suit being of paramount importance.

Pole, in that most excellent treatise, "The Philosophy of Whist," computes that the dealer should hold an average of 3.82 trumps, and each of the other players, 3.06. In a practical experiment of 1000 deals, he found the dealer's average 3.814; first hand's, 3.110; second hand's, 3.119; and third hand's, 2.957. The calculated probability of holding honors is shown by the following table:

HOLDING HONORS.				
Number held by Dealer and Partner.	Probability before Dealing.	Probability an Honor Turned.	Probability No Honor Turned.	Number held by Non-dealers.
	Times in 100 Deals.	Times in 100 Deals.	Times in 100 Deals.	
4	7	11	5	0
3	28	38	24	1
2	39	39	39	2
1	22	12	26	3
0	4	00	6	4
	100	100	100	

The probable distribution of each full suit of 13 cards into long and short suits in the various hands is approximately shown in the following table, compiled from data found in the

GENERAL DISTRIBUTION IN HAND.

Number of Cards in Suit.	CARDS. Trumps. Dealer. Times in 100.	CARDS. Trumps. Non-dealer. Times in 100.	CARDS. Plain Suits. Dealer. Times in 100. 1 Suit.	CARDS. Plain Suits. Dealer. Times in 100. 3 Suits.	CARDS. Plain Suits. Non-dealer. Times in 100. 1 Suit.	CARDS. Plain Suits. Non-dealer. Times in 100. 3 Suits.	Trumps and Plain Suits. In General. 1 Suit.	Trumps and Plain Suits. In General. 3 Suits.	SUITS. In General. Long Suits.	SUITS. In General. Short Suits.	SUITS. In General. Times in 100.
0	0	2	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3	38
1	3	10	9	27	8	24	8	24	2	1	4
2	13	23	22	66	19	57	20	60	2	2	54
3	26	29	32	96	29	87	29	87	3	0	1
4	29	22	21	63	25	75	24	72	3	1	3
5	19	10	11	33	13	39	13	39	166	229	100
6	8	3	3	9	4	12	4	12	%	%	
7	2	1	1	3	1	3	1	3	42	58	100
%	In Trumps, Dealer.								58	42	100
"	" " Non-dealer.								36	62	98
"	In Plain Suits, Dealer.								36	63	99
"	" " Non-dealer.								43	56	99

above-cited work. The table likewise shows the probable combinations of such suits in each

hand; as, according to Dr. Pole, "The probability of any given distribution of a named suit in the four hands is the same as the probability of the same distribution of the four suits in one hand." Some slight sacrifice of extreme accuracy to convenience has been made in reducing the numbers involved to the basis of percentage; but it in no way affects their value for the present purpose.

A further analysis of Dr. Pole's data will demonstrate the probability that the distribution of each 166 long suits will be as follows:

	Times.	Sub-totals.	Suits
1 long suit only.....	38		38
		38	
1 long and 2 shorter long suits..	1		3
1 long and 1 shorter long suit...	32		64
		33	
		71	
2 suits of equal length	26		52
3 suits of equal length	3		9
		29	
	100	100	166

It follows that in every 100 times that a player holds a long suit of any given kind, trumps, for instance, the best long suit of trumps will be held (by some one, himself or another) the same number of times. In other words, 100 of the 166 long suits, or 60 per cent. of the whole number,

are best suits. Taking the sub-totals from the preceding table, an analysis of this 60 per cent. reveals the following:

$38 \times .60 = 22.8$	
$33 \times .60 = 19.8$	42.6
$29 \times .60 =$	17.4
	60

Hence, in every 100 long trump suits, the best suit will probably be held about 60 times; the longest suit, about 43 times in the 60; and that, of two or more equal in length, which contains the best cards, about 17 times. Thus whenever a player holds a long trump suit, the chance that it is the best of its kind is 60 in 100, or 60 per cent.; and, of that, the percentage of longest suits is .71, and of strongest in suits of equal length, .29. In other words, 42.6 and 17.4 are respectively 71 and 29 per cent. of 60. These percentages may be applied later to the calculation of various probabilities of trump superiority as concerning the probabilities of the successful play of the long-suit game.

All of these calculations concerning long suits are of importance for the purposes of this chapter, not because a long weak plain suit is an element of strength in an otherwise weak hand, for the contrary is the fact; but because of two other considerations: first, the greater the number of

unknown cards of any suit in one hand, the greater the probability of more than an average of high cards of that suit in that hand; and, second, long suits are the basis of the conventional system of leads and the resulting play, known as the long-suit game or play. The second of these propositions has been demonstrated in preceding pages. The first may be verified by a glance at the preceding table concerning the holding of honors; wherein it appears that, before the trump has been turned, there is a calculated probability that the dealers (meaning the dealer and his partner) will hold four honors seven times in 100 deals; but after a small card has been turned, only five times. The only change in the situation introduced by the deal is that one of their trumps is now known not to be an honor, reducing their average number of unknown cards in that suit from 6.88 to 5.88. Under the same circumstances, the probability of three honors before the deal is 28 times in 100 deals; after the deal, but 24 in 100.

In this connection may be considered the somewhat similar proposition that, if one hand is shorter than the average in a given suit, the partner's hand is probably longer, and *vice versa*, thus approximating the total to the joint average of the two hands. This is exemplified in Dr. Pole's calculations and experiment regard-

ing the trump suit. The calculated probability, or average, for non-dealers was found to be 3.06; the joint average, 6.12. In 1000 deals, the eldest hand held 3110 and his partner 2957; the one 50 above and the other 103 below the calculated average. The joint holding of the two hands is 6067, or 53 below, being less than $\frac{9}{10}$ of 1 per cent.

The subject of this chapter is the play of the eldest hand; not because of any special art or mystery connected with it as such, but for the reason that other players are guided more or less by preceding play, while the eldest hand has to make the opening lead without knowledge of any other cards than the trump turned and the contents of his own hand. Matthews well says, "The first lead . . . requires judgment." This does not indicate an unreasoning adherence to the long-suit system, though he gave to that a qualified adhesion, as evidenced by the following:

> The best leads are from sequences of three cards or more. If you have none, lead from your most numerous suit *if strong in trumps*. . . .
>
> *Cards being nearly equal*, the point to which all the manœuvres of good Whist-players tend is to establish a long suit, and to preserve the last trump to bring it into play, and to frustrate the same play of their adversaries.

The italics in these extracts do not appear in the original, but are here introduced to attract

attention to a point which will recur later. Meantime the following is from Cavendish:

> The considerations that determine the most advantageous card to lead at the commencement of a hand differ from those which regulate the lead at other periods, for at starting the Doctrine of Probabilities is the only guide; while, as the hand advances, each player is able, with more or less certainty, to draw inferences as to the position of some of the remaining cards.

The Doctrine of Probabilities teaches that the dealer holds, as an average, 25 per cent. more trumps than that doctrine concedes to either of the other players. It likewise teaches that about 4 times in 100 three of the four hands will be long in each of the four suits; that about 58 times in 100 two hands will be thus long, while only about 38 times in 100 will one hand be long and the other three short in any given suit. From this it follows that about 4 times in 100 any named hand should contain three long suits; that about 58 times in 100 any specified hand should contain two long suits; and about 38 times in 100 one long and three short suits. It further appears that, in 100 deals, each suit of cards will be divided into about 166 long and 229 short suits, and, consequently, that, in the same number of deals, each hand will contain about 166 long and 229 short suits, each hand averaging about $1\frac{2}{3}$ long suits.

With this scanty amount of information each player is provided, before examining his hand, at each deal; and from this, and the information derived from the trump turned, and an examination of his own cards, must the eldest hand determine the opening lead after each deal.

Whether the opening lead is from the trump or a plain suit, it must necessarily be from a long or a short one. The great majority of the modern authorities contend that the long suit should generally be chosen, for these reasons: If the long suit is established, and brought in after the adverse trumps have been drawn, a trick will be taken with each of the long cards of that suit, regardless of their intrinsic value. Even though the suit is not so brought in, it is claimed that the commanding cards thereof may be used with great effect in forcing the adverse strong trump hand; that the long-suit system affords the best basis for the combined play of partner's hands, and, consequently, the greatest returns in tricks taken; that it is the best defensive play, as, in addition to the foregoing, it offers the least chance of assisting an adversary in establishing a long suit; and, finally, that it conveys the greatest amount of information to partner, thus enabling him at times to win an additional trick or two by a brilliant coup at the

close of the play. A cursory examination of the foundation of this faith is proposed.

Full success in the long-suit play requires the accomplishment of three things, viz.: that the long suit be established; that the adverse trumps be exhausted or drawn; and that the long suit be thereafter brought in or led. A suit is established when, trumping barred, the holder of the longest suit of a given kind, having the lead, can take a trick with every card thereof remaining in his hand. Adverse trumps are exhausted when none of that suit remains in the hands of the adversaries; they are drawn by the party leading them. An established suit is brought in when the holder obtains the lead and plays the suit. It is evident from the foregoing that the essentials to the successful playing of the long-suit game are superiority in trumps and superiority in a long plain suit, and, finally, in many cases, a card of reëntry (being a winning card, of the trump suit or otherwise) to enable the holder of the established suit to bring it in. The long-suit game is the play of the strong hand. Conceding to one partner or the other probable superiority in a long plain suit whenever either has the best of the trump suit, it would follow that the probability of success in this system should be the same as that of superiority in trumps.

Assuming that there is always one trump hand superior to all others in every deal, in 100 deals there must be a like number of superior hands out of about 166 long trump suits; hence the percentage of probable superiority would be the same as the ratio of 166 to 100, or .60, as has been before seen.

Reference to the table of General Distribution shows that the dealer will probably hold a long trump suit 58 times in 100, and his partner, as also each other player, 36 times. Before the deal the combined chance of trump superiority for the dealer and his partner is represented by $(58+36)\times.60=57$ times (nearly) in 100; that of the eldest hand and his partner, in like manner, should be $(36+36)\times.60=43$ times in 100, hardly of itself a winning probability.

As abstract probability always yields to and is modified by known facts, it is now desirable to ascertain the probability of success in the long-suit play, as it appears to each player after the deal and before the commencement of the play—after the trump has been turned and the player has looked at his own cards. The dealer, when holding a long trump suit, would have his own probability of superiority, 60 in 100, plus that of his partner, which will require further consideration. In 100 times, when the dealer was so favored, the remaining 66 long trump

suits would probably be divided among the other players about equally, resulting in 22 each. Hence the dealer's partner, the second hand, should hold 22 thereof in those 100 times, and his chance of trump superiority should be expressed by $22 \times .60 = 13$ (fractions less than $\frac{1}{2}$ being ignored, and others reckoned as one). It thus appears that when the dealer holds a long trump suit he may calculate his chance of success in the long-suit play as $60 + 13 = 73$, or $(100 + 22) \times .60 = 73$ times in 100. When the dealer is short of trumps, it is probable that in 100 times each other player would hold a long trump suit about 55 times; and the dealer's probability, based upon his partner's probable holding of trumps, would be $55 \times .60 = 33$ times in 100.

The chance of the dealer's partner would be more favorable, owing to the fact that, of the long trump suits not held by himself, the dealer should hold more than either of the other players by the ratio of 36 to 58. Thus, when the second hand holds a long trump suit, in 100 times the dealer should hold another about 30 times, and each of the others about 18. The second hand's probability of success would thus be $(100 + 30) \times .60 = 78$ times in 100. When this player is short of trumps, his chance, based upon the dealer's probable holding (74 to 46 for each of

the others), in like manner, would be $74 \times .60 = 44$ times in 100.

The chances of the eldest hand and his partner are equal, and so may be considered together. In 100 times, when the eldest hand held a long trump suit, the long trump suits would probably be divided about as follows:

Eldest hand	100
Second "	18
Third "	18
Dealer	30
	166

The eldest hand's probability of success in the long-suit play, when holding a long trump suit himself, would thus be $(100 + 18) \times .60 = 71$ times in 100. When this player is short of trumps, the long trump suits would probably be divided in the following manner:

Eldest hand	0
Second "	46
Third "	46
Dealer	74
	166

Here the eldest hand's chance, based upon his partner's probable holding of trumps, and *vice versa*, would be $46 \times .60 = 28$ times in 100. These results may be summarized. The calculated

probability of success in the long-suit play for each player, when himself long in trumps (being the same as for superiority in trumps), is as follows:

Dealer	73	times in	100	Partners
Second hand	78	"	100	
Eldest "	71	"	100	"
Third "	71	"	100	

When short in trumps, the like probability for each player is thus:

Dealer	33	times in	100	Partners
Second hand	44	"	100	
Eldest "	28	"	100	"
Third "	28	"	100	

These probabilities presuppose perfect play for the purpose indicated, but, even so, are adverse to success, unless the long trump suit is actually in hand. Even then, of the 60 per cent. of favorable chances, 29 per cent. represent the probability that one or more trump suits of equal length, but less strength, will be extant, a position subject to a considerable chapter of accidents. It is, of course, possible that a trump suit originally weaker may be made to become the stronger through the instrumentality of lucky and skilful forcing of the strong trump hand; but the probabilities, as was said of old concerning the heathen gods, are with the

stronger. The minimum of trump strength which, with skill, may suffice to make the long-suit play successful is said to be four, an honor, or, possibly, a ten. Matthews says, "With an honor (or even a ten), with three other trumps, by well managing them, you have a right to expect success."

It seems to be sufficiently established that when the eldest hand holds not less than the named minimum of trump strength (probably less than 36 times in 100 consecutive deals) the conventional long-suit play should be adopted for the opening lead as strictly in accordance with the Doctrine of Probabilities.

Here, perhaps better than elsewhere, attention may be called to the fact that, aside from its merits in direct attack and defence, the most scientific purpose to be effected by the universal adoption of this system is the conveying of information by means of conventional play. This, if adhered to by all, will usually, in the course of the first six or seven tricks, indicate the position of every important unplayed card. The ending of the hand thus becomes "A Whist Problem," wherein the skilled player is sometimes enabled, by adapting his play to the inferred positions of the cards, to secure by a successful coup one or more tricks not otherwise attainable. Here, however, as elsewhere, to him

who hath shall be given, as the position inures to the benefit only of skill combined with strength. It must follow that, in this respect, the long-suit play is disadvantageous to those partners who, together, hold weaker hands than their opponents. By adopting it they simply furnish information to be used against themselves, thus playing their adversaries' game.

If the long-suit play is to be adopted by the eldest hand in those cases (probably less than 36 in 100) wherein the chances for success are rather better than 71 in 100, there remains the question, What is the best system for the about twice as numerous cases where, being short of, or otherwise fatally weak in, trumps, the favorable chances are only about 28 in 100? The first and most obvious consideration is that, as compared with their opponents, the eldest hand and his partner are, when the contrary is not proved, probably weak. In 100 average hands, strong and weak together, the chances in their favor before the deal are but 43 in 100, while those favorable to their opponents are 57 in 100, a difference of 14 per cent. in favor of the dealer. A carefully conducted experiment by Dr. Pole, 1000 deals played through on the long-suit system, resulted as follows:

The dealers won the odd trick 182 times in 1000 deals, the non-dealers only 150 times. The dealers made a score

by cards 580 times in 1000 deals; the non-dealers made a score by cards only 420 times. This result is startling, as the casual impression is that the lead is of more advantage than the deal for the odd trick. But the explanation lies in the great superiority as regards the holding of trumps which . . . always attends the dealer's side.

Matthews says, "The odd trick has always been supposed in favor of the leader; but this is an error, as the dealer has the advantage in this, as in every other score."

It should, therefore, be conceded (as established by calculation, experiment, and authority) that (as compared with their opponents before the deal) the eldest hand and his partner are probably weak. In Dr. Pole's experiment, the difference in the number of times when a score by cards was made was 16 per cent. in favor of the dealer, corresponding quite closely to his calculated advantage of 14 per cent. before the deal, in establishing and bringing in a long plain suit, the probability being the same as for superiority in trumps. As coincidences, it may be interesting to note that, according to the preceding calculations, the dealer should hold a long trump suit 580 times in 1000, while his probable advantage in holding trump suits of five or more is just 15 per cent., as may be ascertained by reference to the table of General Distribution.

Toward an answer to the question about what

is the best system for the opening play by the eldest hand when short of trumps, these data seem to be available: 1. Under such circumstances the eldest hand and partner are very probably weaker than their adversaries; and Matthews indorses "that maxim which enjoins you never to play a strong game with a weak hand, or *vice versa*." 2. The long-suit play is that of the strong hand. 3. The opening lead must be from either a long or a short suit.

The long-suit play seeming not particularly full of promise under the given conditions, the query naturally arises, What can be said in favor of a system based upon play from the short suit? Upon this point Messrs. Cavendish and Clay may be permitted to testify as experts. Cavendish speaks:

> It is advisable in most cases where the game is desperate, and where it is clear that your partner must be strong in your weak suit to save the game, to lead your weakest suit. . . . Your partner should finesse deeply in the suit you lead him, and should not return it, but, actuated by motives similar to yours, should lead his weakest suit, in which you should finesse deeply, and continue your weak suit, and so on.

Clay, under the title, "When to Disregard Rule," gives the following:

> Some such case is not very uncommon. Your adversaries are very strong in trumps. They have commenced

with three rounds of them, making the three first tricks, having four by honors, and having three trumps left, all three in the same hand. It is clear that if they can make one trick only in the other suits their game is won. You now win the fourth trick, and find yourself with one strong suit, say an ace, queen, ten, or an ace, king, knave, or ten suit, and with no strength whatever in the remaining two suits.

Your first consideration will be that your partner must be strong in your weak suits. He need not have the whole of them, for if he is led to more than once, successful finesse in them may enable him to make all the tricks, although even two honors in one, or both of them, may be against him to his right. If you play your strong suit, you part with the possibility of getting the lead, and leading to your partner the suits in which, in order to save the game, he must be strong. You should therefore lead to him whichever of your two weak suits appears the more advantageous. He will finesse deeply, for the case is desperate, and if he succeeds he will, if he is a fine player, act on the same principle which dictated your play, and will lead to you his weak suit, which, of course, is your strong one. You finesse in your turn, lead to him again in a weak suit, and wait for him again to lead to your strength. You may readily be able to lead to him three times in this way. Both his tricks and yours will, at some time or other, be trumped, but for this you are prepared, and it cannot be helped, as there are three trumps against you in one hand, which must make. When your adversary trumps, he must lead up to you or your partner. I have seen many a desperate game saved in this way, and, as few things are less intelligible than an intricate combination merely described as above, I will place the cards in an order which will explain my meaning and enable you to play the hand with a successful result.

Your hand is marked No. 1; your left-hand adversary's No. 2; and so on.

1. Two small spades (trumps). Ace, king, knave, ten, in clubs. Ten and three small diamonds. Nine and two small hearts.

2. Ace, king, and one small trump. Two small clubs. King, knave, and two small hearts. King, knave, and two small diamonds.

3. Two small trumps. Three small clubs. Ace, queen, ten, and eight in hearts. Ace, queen, and two small diamonds.

4. Tierce to a queen and three small trumps. Queen, nine, eight, and one small club. Two small hearts. The nine in diamonds.

No. 4 commences, and leads his queen of trumps, which makes, and he follows it with the knave. This his partner is obliged to win with the king, and, in order to draw as many trumps as he can, he plays out his ace. Both you and your partner renounce, he discarding a small club, and you a small diamond, for a reason to be given hereafter. It is now clear that, as No. 4 holds three more trumps, you must make every trick in the other suits in order to save the game.

No. 2 still remains with the lead, and following your discard also because his diamonds are as strong as his hearts, he leads a small diamond, on which his partner can only put the nine won by your ten. If you play out your clubs, which is your only strong suit, you have lost the game. But as your partner must be strong in hearts, and as you do not wish to help to establish the diamonds of your opponents, you play your nine of hearts, which he passes. You continue the suit; he takes the trick and leads you a club, when you finesse your ten, continue the heart, and the rest of the hand plays itself. You have made your seven tricks.

If you are asked why you originally discarded a diamond when you held ten, four, in that suit, and only nine, three, in hearts, your reason is that in this exceptional case it is better for you to retain in each of your weak suits the power of leading as often as there may be occasion to your partner.

In such cases as these the play I have advised is still more necessary if the trumps remaining in against you are to your left hand. For if you have all the best cards of a suit, and your partner some small cards in it, so that you are sure to force the strong hand, yet he when forced of necessity leads through your partner and up to the suits in which you have nothing, which is a more disadvantageous position than if your partner is led up to by you or by his other adversary.

These extracts have been given at length because they are the teachings of masters and set forth in masterly manner the leading principles of the weak- or short-suit play. The reader may ascertain how much the preliminary drawing of the trumps really affected the result by considering No. 4, the dealer, and No. 1, the eldest hand. If the same lead be made by him, the same play continued to a force of the strong hand, and if trumps are then drawn, the result is the same. If Nos. 4 and 2, instead, unconventionally play for the ruff, their opponents make but five tricks. The reader may then try if he can do better for them by the long-suit system. By that system the strong suits are led, by the other, led up to, in the hand of the partner, and to the intrinsic

strength of the suit is added that of position. By trying the experiment last suggested, the reader will find that the short-suit play above given just offsets the advantage which the adversaries derived from the original lead. That such a line of play is at times correct in principle, let Cavendish bear witness:

> If you have not had the lead before, it is in most cases advisable to open your strong suit when you possess great strength in any suit, for you open such suit to advantage; but with weak or only moderately strong [long] suits, which you open to a disadvantage, you would, as a rule, do better to return your partner's original lead, or to lead up to the weak suit of your right-hand adversary, or through the strong suit of your left-hand adversary. When in doubt as to opening your own suit or returning your partner's, you should, as a general rule, be guided by your strength in trumps. With a strong trump hand, play your own game; with a weak trump hand, play your partner's game.

From some such considerations as these has arisen the so-called short-suit system, that of finesse and tenace instead of main strength, bearing about the same relation to the regular long-suit play as chess does to checkers. It should neither be hastily condemned nor indiscriminately adopted.

Each thing in its place is best.

The advantage of this system consists in its conceded effectiveness, under favorable circum-

stances, in the play of hands devoid of or weak in trumps. Its disadvantages are due chiefly to the great difficulty at times, in the absence of a regular system, of recognizing the nature of the lead, as in this play partner's suit should never be returned, or a possible advantage of finesse or tenace sacrificed. It is usually quite as difficult to find two players who can be relied upon to properly support each other in this system as to beat their game when found.

To present more clearly and connectedly to the eye, as the open door to the understanding, the most probable arrangement of the various long suits in the several hands, the following table is introduced. The starting-point is the trump suit. It has been already set forth that, of the 166 long trump suits probably extant in the course of 100 deals, the dealer will probably hold 58. The remainder, 108, equally apportioned among the other three players, will give them 36 each. It has likewise been specified that, in the course of 100 deals, each player would probably hold 166 long suits. The dealer holding 58 long trump suits, his quota of long plain suits would be the difference between 58 and 166, or 108. This last number, equally apportioned among the three plain suits, would give a probability of 36 long plain suits in each different plain suit of cards. Hence the dealer's hand will probably

average, for 100 times, 58 long trump suits and 36 long plain suits of each kind, 166 all told. Similarly each non-dealer, averaging about 36 long trump suits, would likewise average about 130 long plain suits, 43⅓ each, viz.:

LONG SUITS.					
Players.	Trumps.	Plain Suits.			Total.
Dealer	58	36	36	36	166
Eldest hand	36	43⅓	43⅓	43⅓	166
Second hand	36	43⅓	43⅓	43⅓	166
Third hand	36	43⅓	43⅓	43⅓	166
Total	166	166	166	166	664

The probability above indicated is, of course, that obtaining before the deal, after which probability is to a certain extent superseded by knowledge. Suppose that, according to the probabilities, the eldest hand, on looking at his cards, should find that he was short of trumps, and, moreover, held a weak suit hand. Here ensues a new set of probabilities. Being certainly short of trumps, the probabilities that the others are long in that suit are increased by the amount of

the eldest hand's average percentage, to be apportioned, approximately, according to the original chances of the others, i.e., second and third hands each 36 in 100 times, dealer 58. The sum of these numbers, 36, 36, and 58, is 130, and the entire probability of long trump suits is 166 in 100 deals. Hence the following proportions:

Second hand.....	130	:	36	: :	166	:	46
Third hand	130	:	36	: :	166	:	46
Dealer	130	:	58	: :	166	:	74
							166

It thus appears that the dealer's chance of holding a long trump suit, so far as the eldest hand may know, is now 74 in 100, and that of each of the two others 46 in 100; or, as chances are ordinarily but deceptively reckoned, nearly 3 to 1 that the dealer holds a long trump suit, and a trifle less than an even chance that either of the other two does. There is, however, after the deal, nothing in the nature of chance about it. The several players either do or do not hold the suits named. But, by playing upon the assumption that the calculated probabilities are certainties, in a hundred, a thousand, or an infinite number of instances, that assumption should be verified in a greater or less majority of the total number of times; and the greater that total number, the more certain such verification.

The chances pertaining to the holding of the long plain suits have now, after the deal, been affected by the known status of the eldest hand and the accordingly changed probabilities concerning the trump suit. Should the eldest hand now lead from a short suit, the probabilities that the other hands may be long in the same are ascertained and indicated in the following table. The total probable number of long suits of each kind is 166 in 100 deals; so, too, of the whole number of long suits in each hand.

LONG SUITS.				
Players.	Trump Suits.	Trump Suits.	Plain Suits.	Plain Suits.
Dealer.....	166	− 74 =	92	332 : 92 : : 166 : 46
Second hand....	166	− 46 =	120	332 : 120 : : 166 : 60
Third hand.....	166	− 46 =	120	332 : 120 : : 166 : 60
Total		166	332	166

It is thus made to appear that in 100 deals, when the eldest hand was short of trumps, a short-suit lead would present better than an even chance of leading through a long suit in the hand of the second player; precisely the same

chance of finding the third player long of the suit, and a slightly less (though still better than even) chance of leading up to a short suit in the hand of the dealer, the respective chances being 60, 60, and (100—46) = 54 in 100. The only special danger for this lead is that of leading up to the best suit of its kind in the hand of the dealer; the chance of leading up to a tenace, or second-best guarded, being shared in common with the long-suit lead. It appears from the above table that, under the circumstances specified, the dealer should be long of the suit led about 46 times in 100. As about 60 per cent. of all long suits are best long suits, the dealer should hold the best of the suit so led by the eldest hand about 60 per cent. of those 46 times, or about 28 times in 100, this adverse chance being precisely the same as that previously ascertained for success of the long-suit play under like circumstances. Should the third hand possess the necessary minimum of trump strength to adopt the long-suit game upon getting a lead, his chance for success would be a trifle better than 60 in 100. For the rest, he has been given as good an opportunity for getting the lead, and put into as good position for using to the best advantage whatever strength he may chance to have, as was possible to his partner.

Should the third player capture the first trick,

being short of trumps himself, a new set of chances comes in. The eldest hand and his partner both being short of trumps, it is evident that length in that suit must be divided between the dealer and his partner, and in 100 deals would probably be distributed about as follows:

LONG TRUMP SUITS.		
166 — 4 = 162	120 : 74 : : 162 : 100	Dealer.
74 + 46 = 120	120 : 46 : : 162 : 62	Second hand.

The four long suits, deducted from the full probability, 166, are one each from the four combinations of three long suits each, which would probably occur in 100 deals, but are here incompatible with the terms of the proposition, according to which both the eldest hand and his partner are short of trumps.

Should the holder of the third hand take the first trick in his partner's original short-suit lead, being himself short of trumps, but long of the suit originally led, another new set of probabilities would arise. It is now known that the first and third players are short of trumps, and that the first is short, and the third long, of the suit originally led; it has also been found probable that the long trump suits, when the first and

third players are short, will be divided between the dealer and his partner in about the proportion of 100 to 62. The third player, being supposed constantly long in the suit led, would in 100 deals hold such long suit 100 times.

These, as indicated in the table of General Distribution, probably represent 38 times when one long and three short suits only are extant, 58 times when two long suits are out at the same time, and 4 times when three long suits are outstanding at once. The 38 single long suits give no trouble; the 58 duplicates should be divided between the dealer and his partner in the proportion of their capacity, and the surplus suits of the four other combinations necessarily equally; making a total of dealer, 26, and second hand, 40, the results being arrived at as follows:

166 − 62 = 104	170 : 104 : : 66 : 40	Second hand.
166 − 100 = 66	170 : 66 : : 66 : 26	Dealer.
170		

If the third player now returns a short-suit lead, it is evidently highly probable that the eldest hand will be long of that suit. Assuming that he is so, in 100 deals the most probable dis-

tribution of long suits is, in like manner, 100, 41, and 25, for the eldest hand, the second hand, and dealer, respectively. Assuming these probabilities to be certainties, it might similarly be made to appear that the remaining long suits would probably be distributed between the eldest, second, and third hands, and the dealer, in the proportions respectively of 64, 23, 64, 15. All this is, of course, only rough-and-ready approximation, concerning which Carlyle says: "It is true, all goes by approximation in this world; with any not insupportable approximation we must be patient."

The approximations at which we have just arrived may be tabulated as follows:

LONG SUITS.					
Players.	Trumps.	Plain Suits.			Total.
Eldest hand.....	0	0	100	64	164
Second hand	62	40	41	23	166
Third hand.....	0	100	0	64	164
Dealer	100	26	25	15	166
Total	162	166	166	166	660

Should the eldest hand and his partner (the first and third players) be short of trumps and likewise of the suit originally led, the probabilities are changed in accordance with the known facts. The distribution of the long trump suits would be as above, while the long suits of the original lead would be divided between the same players (dealer and partner), but in reversed proportions—second hand, 100, and dealer, 62. Should third hand take the trick and return a short-suit lead, there is evidently a very high degree of probability that the eldest hand will be long therein. Assuming the fact, in 100 deals the eldest hand would be constantly long and the remaining long suits of that kind divided between the second hand and dealer equally, 33 each. These probabilities, if assumed as facts, would indicate that the long suits of the remaining plain suit would be apportioned in the proportions of 100 to third hand, 62 to the eldest, and 2 each to the others. These results, arranged in their order, constitute one more table, being the last. The probabilities therein set forth evidently apply to very improbable hands. It is, however, probable that, at times, the improbable will happen; and it therefore becomes necessary to compute and communicate the probabilities applying to these improbabilities. With this perhaps unnecessary preamble the table itself is submitted.

LONG SUITS.					
Players.	Trumps.	Plain Suits.			Total.
Eldest hand.....	0	0	100	62	162
Second hand.....	62	100	33	2	197
Third hand.....	0	0	0	100	100
Dealer.....	100	62	33	2	197
Total.....	162	162	166	166	656

The preceding tables and calculations are presented not as means for ascertaining the probable contents of any particular hand or combination of hands, but for the purpose of indicating approximately, under the stated circumstances, the probable distribution of long suits (trump and plain) in an infinite number of deals.

It may be well to sum up past progress before making a further advance. It has been shown in a previous chapter that chance or probability offers no guidance for the playing of specific hands as such, but only as parts of a system.

Cavendish has been cited as authority for the proposition that "at starting the Doctrine of Probabilities is the only guide; while, as the hand advances, each player is able, with more

or less certainty, to draw inferences as to the position of some of the remaining cards."

Messrs. Cavendish and Clay have been quoted on the point that, in cases of demonstrated extreme weakness, the original lead should be made from a weak suit.

Dr. Pole's data have been introduced to show the relative average or probable weakness of the eldest hand and partner, as compared with the dealer and partner.

Derivative data have been used to indicate that, when the eldest hand is himself short of trumps, it is contrary to probability to assume that his partner is strong therein, or that the long-suit play can be successfully adopted.

It has been modestly, even diffidently, claimed, because of these premises, that the original lead of the eldest hand, when weak in trumps, should generally be from a weak plain suit; and that, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, such a lead should always be inferred by the partner, who, if himself weak in trumps, should, on winning a trick, generally return a lead from a similar, but in no case the same, suit.

The only point of difference herein with Messrs. Cavendish and Clay is this: If the weak- or short-suit system constitutes the best defence against overwhelming strength in trumps, then (in the opinion of the writer) it should be adopted

whenever partial knowledge and probability unite in indicating the superior strength of the adversaries, before the weak hands are further weakened by a losing contest, and without wasting leads from a weak hand. Playing this system under such circumstances has been shown to promise a threefold probability of resulting advantage.

If the short-suit leads are thus adopted, the question next arising is, What card should originally be led from such a suit? On this point is quoted Clay, whom, in his lifetime, Cavendish styled "the greatest of living Whist-players," "the most brilliant player of his day." Clay commences his chapter on "The Lead" as follows:

In leading from two cards lead the higher. A lead from a queen or knave and one small card is not objectionable, if you have a miserably weak hand or one in which all the other suits are manifestly disadvantageous; your queen or knave may be valuable to your partner. But the lead from king and one small card can hardly ever be forced on you, and is only justifiable when your partner has indicated by the cards he has thrown away that this is his strong suit, or when, to save or win the game, it is clear that he must be strong in the suit. The ace and one small card can also scarcely ever be an advantageous lead unless under similar circumstances.

In leading from three cards lead the highest. Avoid, however, leading from the king or the queen with two small cards of the suit. The cases are very rare when either of these leads can be forced on you. With nothing

else to do, and without any indication from your partner, you will be right to lead the lowest card; but when he has shown you that this is his strongest suit, you will generally be right in leading the highest. Avoid also leading from king, queen, and one small card. If this suit is led elsewhere, you will generally make both your king and your queen, unless the ace is to your left, and sometimes even then. Whereas, if you lead the suit and the ace is against you, you can only make one trick.

A lead from queen, knave, and one small card, or knave, ten, and one small card, is not bad when you have no better suit.

The lead from ace and two small cards is rarely advisable. The ace is better kept to bring in your strong suit. If forced on you, the lead is from the lowest card.

Under the prevailing system of American Leads, the lead of knave, ten, or nine from the head of a short suit is most easily recognized as such.

As every advantage should be taken of tenace and finesse, suits headed by a major or minor fourchette should rarely be led from a weak hand. Hence it might even happen that (with one plain suit headed, say, by ace, queen, and another by king, knave) the original lead of a singleton might become a matter of necessity. In the case under consideration it would be little likely of itself to do serious harm, and might well result in a successful finesse and the ultimate making of a small trump. Such a lead is

generally, however, even less commendable in the short- than in the long-suit play.

Finesse may and should be freely practised in this play, as the suit led is not partner's strong one, and successful finesse is an element essential to the success of our system. As has been before stated, a short-suit lead is really a lead for partner, and he is fully justified in treating the suit as his own.

Matthews says, "The best leads are from sequences of three cards or more." With such a sequence of honors the prospect of forcing the strong trump hand might be sufficiently good to render its play advisable. At the worst, partner need not be deceived to a greater extent than concerning one small card.

In order to assist the player in determining (in doubtful cases and plain suits) the nature of the lead, the following suggestions are offered:

If, when king is led, you can locate both ace and queen, a short suit is indicated; so, when queen is led, if you can locate both king and knave; when knave is led, if you can locate both king and queen; when ten is led, if you can locate either king or knave; and when nine is led, if you can locate the ace, the ten, or the queen and knave.

Dr. Bond Stowe is credited with the authorship of the following excellent rules applying to the low-card leads:

If you can place all the cards from the one led to the ten inclusive, the lead is forced.

If you can place all the cards from the one led to the nine inclusive, and can also locate the ace, the lead is forced.

If you can place all the cards but one, from the one led to the ten inclusive, and can also locate the queen and knave, the lead is forced.

Apropos to the present subject, Matthews again suggests: "If your partner shows a weak game, force him whether or not you are otherwise entitled to do it."

Discards should follow the general rule that when the trump suit is adverse they should be made from the best-protected suit, and guards be kept on those of the adversaries.

Caution should be exercised in originally leading trumps from only five. The dealer is to be feared.

"Good old Matthews," as Clay styles him, offers the following emphatic suggestion:

With a strong hand in trumps, particularly if you have a long suit, avoid ruffing, and still more over-ruffing, your right-hand adversary as much as possible. . . . This is a maxim less understood, less practised, and more indispensably necessary than almost any other.

Adherence to the first part of this maxim by the eldest hand preserves the strength of that hand; observance of the second does the like, and, in addition, relatively weakens the dealer,

who, until the contrary is proved, should be considered the holder of the adverse strong trump hand.

The original opposing elements of the game are the deal and the lead, named in the order of their relative importance, concerning which Matthews must once more be cited as an authority. Of the deal, but with special reference to the score by honors and the dealer's advantage therein, he says:

> This is so decided an advantage, where five is the number to be played for [at Short Whist], that I am confident two bad players with the first deal in every game would in a long run beat the two best in England.

It is true that in the American game honors are not scored, but the holding of honors is no obstacle to the taking of tricks. On this point is introduced Lord Henry Bentinck, whom Cavendish mentions as a player of the past generation of high repute. He was the originator of the Call for Trumps. The following is from Cavendish's "Card-table Talk":

> It may be interesting to record Lord Henry's opinion of the comparative values of the scores of three and four at Short Whist.
>
> To non-players it may be premised that there are many who prefer the score of three to that of four, because at three honors can be counted, but at four they cannot. On the question being discussed before Lord Henry, he epi-

grammatically observed, "I have yet to learn that holding three honors is any bar to winning the odd trick."

This puts the whole case in a nutshell.

To the eldest hand, when weak in trumps, probability clearly indicates that the dealer and his partner preponderate in the trump suit, and himself and partner in the plain suits. It behooves him, then, to promptly avail himself to the utmost of this element of strength, together with the only other available to him, that of position. Both are most probably effected by the short-suit lead. If his partner manifests trump strength no particular harm need have been done by the original lead. It did not, it is true, declare the strongest suit, but it did indicate a weak one; and the partner, after considering his own hand, should thereupon be able to determine the leader's best suit with a considerable degree of accuracy. It is true that the chances are about two to one all around against the original lead under such circumstances hitting the third player's longest plain suit; but they do favor either that result or the finding of one of two strong suits in that hand, besides the favorable probabilities concerning the other two hands.

Whoever (in the absence of knowledge) plays contrary to probability plays against himself. Probability indicating weakness, weakness should

be assumed unless the contrary is manifested. For the eldest hand and his partner weakness should be assumed unless the contrary is indicated; for the dealer and his partner strength may be assumed. For the strong hands, the open game; strength may be published to the board. For the weak, a concealed game; the details of weakness ought not to be made known, as that should result to the advantage of the adversaries. For the eldest hand and partner, generally the short-suit game of tenace and finesse, with its absence of specific information concerning the precise number and denomination of the cards held. For the dealer and partner, the play of the strong hand, the long-suit game, with its fulness of information, leading up to a possible brilliant final coup, one of the chief purposes of that play.

Here, again, such coups generally can only be played by the strong. Hence the unanimous shaping of the game with reference to such a possible (not probable) termination is obviously to the disadvantage of the weaker hands. It affords but a sad satisfaction to be able to see how such a coup might be effected when lacking the strength to make the knowledge effectual; still sadder to know that you have aided your opponents to make one. The short-suit player should, however, have the best of the information, as, in addition to that furnished by his op-

ponents, he knows the contents of his own hand, from which data he should be able, toward the close of the play, to infer, with more or less certainty, the cards held by his partner. The adoption by the eldest hand and partner of this system would, from the resulting comparative lack of information furnished by them, place a decided obstacle in the way of the achieving of the final coup by the long-suit adversaries, thus depriving them of some of their advantage and consequently rendering more nearly equal the respective chances of the deal and the lead.

The following extract from a comparatively recent communication in "Whist," names being omitted, affords an amusing confirmation of the correctness of the intimation that the general adoption of the conventional system of giving information is essential to the full success of that system, the information necessarily inuring to the benefit of strength combined with skill:

> Have you heard of that famous match game at Progressive Duplicate Whist played at the —— Club a short time since? ——, ——, ——, and other celebrities were guests—twenty-four players in all, and all of them good Whisters, except one pair which filled in to accommodate. Of this pair one is a very moderate player; the other is so ignorant of the game as not to know the commonest leads, nor even the meaning of a signal. *This pair won the match*, gaining the highest number of points over all others. There is nothing like the Duplicate as a conclusive test of skill!

Despite the apparent belief of "Whist's" correspondent that something akin to a miracle had been effected in behalf of those whom he clearly considered "duffers," the reason for the unexpected result is quite obvious. The "duffers" played Whist, essentially a simple game, according to their ability. The others played "information," which is very intricate and intensely scientific, against them. The "duffers" may have been able to profit somewhat by the information proffered by their opponents, who were evidently puzzled and defeated by the lack of it in the play of the accommodating "duffers."

The short-suit system, then, according to the probabilities, affords the best opportunities for utilizing whatever of strength may be available to the weak hands. It furnishes the minimum of information to the adversaries, thus reducing their chances and rendering more difficult their game, while not concealing from an attentive and observant partner anything which it is necessary that he should know. It does not contravene either of those excellent maxims of almost universal application: 1. "Never play your adversary's game." 2. "Never play a strong game with a weak hand, or *vice versa*."

But it may be objected that this system (which, if adopted as such, is not open to the objection of being irregular or misleading)

would interfere with and abrogate that close communion and intimate partnership between partners which is propounded as the foundation and keystone of the modern scientific play. A moment's reflection should show such a contention to be unfounded. By this system, according to the Doctrine of Probabilities, each player proffers to his partner an opportunity to conduct the strength of his own hand under the most favorable circumstances and according to his own best skill and judgment. An example of the loftiest ideal of human conduct! Altruism applied to Whist!

The long-suit game owes much of its favor among experts to these two facts: a weak partner, confining himself uniformly to that method, can do but little harm, while his strict adherence to that system, with the exaggerated amount of information thereby conveyed, enables the superior player on occasion to play both hands instead of one. Upon this point Clay expresses himself thus:

> Let him [the beginner] play for a time—it may be a year—rigidly according to rule, and he will then be in a position to seize the occasions on which rule should be departed from. In the mean time he will have amused himself to little if any disadvantage, and the fine player will scarcely have asked for a better partner than one who, by careful attention to rule, has given to him every

possible indication of the position of the cards, and has enabled him, so to speak, to play twenty-six cards instead of thirteen.

Another reason for the general agreement of the English authorities is this: Whist is primarily an English game, and the first known codification of its rules, about 1728, commenced with, "Lead from the strong suit." Apart from the unquestionable merits of this system, here may be found a potent factor in its perpetuation. For, aside from that wonderfully enlightened nation of the East, China, there is none wherein the veneration for established authority and time-honored institutions is so thoroughly ingrained as a national characteristic as in England. The coffee-house players, in 1728, said, "Lead from the strong suit." Cavendish, in his edition of 1893, says, "Lead originally from your strongest suit." And, despite his propounding of the proposition, "At starting the Doctrine of Probabilities is the only guide," he perhaps unconsciously hedges against a claim for the uniform application of that rule by suggesting that "the conclusion that the chances are in favor of a certain line of play is not arrived at by abstract calculation, but by general reasoning, confirmed by the accumulated experience of practised players." In all other like games, and lines of play in Whist, experience

only confirms the result of correctly calculated probabilities. It is hoped that the short-suit play, as here advocated, will not prove itself a *lusus naturæ* by being the solitary exception to the general rule. To the rest is opposed the opinion of La Place, "Une approximation de ce genre, lorsqu'elle est bien conduite, est toujours préférable aux raisonnements les plus spécieux."

The principal development of the game within the past one hundred and sixty years has been in the direction of publishing to the board by conventional play fuller, and still fuller, information concerning the contents of the respective hands. The same rate of progress, hereafter, for the same length of time in the same direction, might not improbably result in the cards being originally exposed upon the table in front of each player and played from that position. The resulting game would be highly scientific, comparatively simple, and undoubtedly enjoyable; but, as the charge of the Light Brigade was pronounced magnificent, but not war, so that game of full and open information, whatever else it might have to recommend it, would not be Whist; and the present generation of players, should they then return to earth, would have much to learn and much to forget.

The play here suggested for the non-dealing partners, when weak in trumps, is no departure

from, but rather a return toward, the best methods of the earlier masters of the game as developed by Clay, "the most brilliant player of his day." It provides a point for compromise and union between the contending schools of long-suit and short-suit players, reducing all to a comprehensive system; and in its most radical interpretation it consists merely in the more extended application of the universally accepted principle that when the facts are unknown probability should guide. Its general adoption would, it is respectfully contended, render the game a harmonious whole, would double its fascination, and would add to the admirable system of American Leads, as a component part of the established American Game, a complement in a system of American Play.

CHAPTER XI

FINALLY

THE mastery of the preceding chapters will enable the reader, with sufficient practice, to play Whist acceptably in the best Whist society. That, however, like other "best society," is limited in its membership and hence not always and everywhere attainable. One conspicuous difference between the man of the world and the man who is not is adaptability. He who has truly "seen life" has learned that human nature is the same in all essentials everywhere and always; that the points of difference are merely matters of bent and finish; and, having learned thus much, he has acquired the art of adapting himself, more or less completely, to the specific company in which he happens to find himself. If he is wise in his generation he will know that the various grades of humanity, as a Southern Congressman once said of those of whiskey, are

all good, but some kinds are better than others. This applies, in all its fulness, to all systems of Whist play. If they amount to systems they are alike in their essential features; and in Whist, as in matters of vastly greater moment, there is a world of sound sense in this maxim: "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity."

Before the days of Hoyle the rules for play had been summarized as follows: "Lead from the strong suit, study your partner's hand, and attend to the score." Here are expressed the essentials of Whist; all the rest are matters of detail. It is, however, true that a full, accurate, and critical knowledge of details, coupled with capacity to make use of it, marks the master in all matters of business, work, or play. It is likewise true that masters are few and journeymen many. Let us add to the original rule one important exception and a few brief maxims. This is the exception:

Unless the eldest hand holds at least four trumps, headed by the ten or better, he should lead originally from his most advantageous weak plain suit; and his partner, unless possessing at least that minimum of trump strength, should adopt the same line of play, each leading from his own weakness to his partner's probable strength in the endeavor to establish a see-saw

in plain suits, likewise taking every advantage of finesse and tenace.

The maxims are as follows:

Always lead trumps from five or more.

Always return partner's trump lead and answer his call.

Generally lead trumps from four after your own or your partner's suit is established.

Lead trumps to stop a cross-ruff.

Always make the trump signal and echo when proper and practicable.

Never force your partner to trump, unless he is weak or you are strong in trumps, or unless the resulting trick saves or wins the game, or in playing for the odd trick, or establishing an evident cross-ruff.

In plain long suits:

Never originally lead the ace, except from a suit of five or more, or from ace, queen, knave, four, or more.

Never so lead the king, except from a sequence and a suit of four exactly.

Never so lead the queen, except from a sequence with king (with or without ace) in a suit of five or more, or from queen, knave, ten, four, or more.

Never so lead the knave, except from a sequence with king and queen (with or without ace) in a suit of five or more.

Never so lead the ten, except from king, knave, ten, four, or more.

Except in the excepted cases, originally lead fourth-best.

Do not unnecessarily change your suit, except sometimes when weak in trumps and holding a singleton.

In partner's suit return him the higher of any two or the lowest of any three or more thereof remaining in hand.

If you have a strong suit of your own, better lead it once before returning partner's.

Unblock in your partner's suit; retain what strength you can in your opponents'.

In short plain suits:

In such suits known to be your partner's best, lead from the highest downward.

Otherwise retain the strength, if any, in your own hand, being especially careful not to open a suit containing best and third-best or second- and fourth-best, except as a matter of necessity.

If the adversaries commence by drawing the trumps, seek to establish the see-saw in plain suits.

In trumps:

With more than three but less than seven trumps (unless with at least three honors or king, queen, ten), lead fourth-best; otherwise as in plain suits, except lead knave from a head se-

quence of knave, ten, nine. With but three or less, lead from the highest down.

If weak in trumps, make small ones when you can; seek to establish a cross-ruff when practicable.

If to the points above specified be added the full system of American Leads, together with the ability to so profit by them as to correctly locate all the important cards unplayed of the last six in the several hands, with the further ability to so adapt the play to the known position of the cards at any stage of the game as to make the utmost number of tricks possible to the conjoined hands, nothing further is lacking but that genius which Matthews says is necessary for acquiring "the whole finesse of the game."

Without the ability to profit by the information to be derived from the purely signaling leads, those leads are useless, if not worse, as possibly conveying valuable information to the opponents instead of partner. "Information" chiefly benefits the superior player and strong hand. To fully profit by such information a thorough understanding of position, tenace, and finesse is necessary, as well as of the various tricks and stratagems of actual play. Because of this the players of the "old school" were wont to insist that "Whist cannot be learned

from books." That is true; but it is equally true that it cannot be thoroughly learned without them. Theory and practice are alike indispensable.

When your partner cannot play up to your level you must play down to his, making as much as you can out of your own hand, and remembering with resignation that, while an extended chain is no stronger than its weakest link, it is frequently possible, by looping and "fidding," to keep the strain from that link. If your partner is a superior player, follow; if inferior, lead; if equal, average it up with him.

Perhaps an unusual amount of attention has been given throughout to the "personal equation." If so, it must have been for the reason that it has seemed, aside from a few essential principles and practices, the most important factor in solving the old, yet ever new, problem of playing winning Whist. And here the writer will respectfully and regretfully take leave of the reader in wishing him, if not "a youth of frolics, an old age of cards," yet "a clear fire, a clean hearth, and the rigor of the game."

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